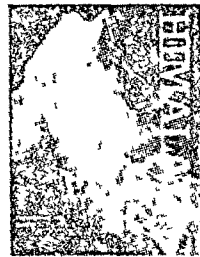
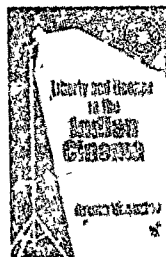
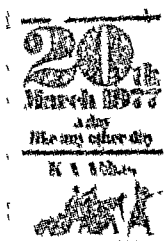


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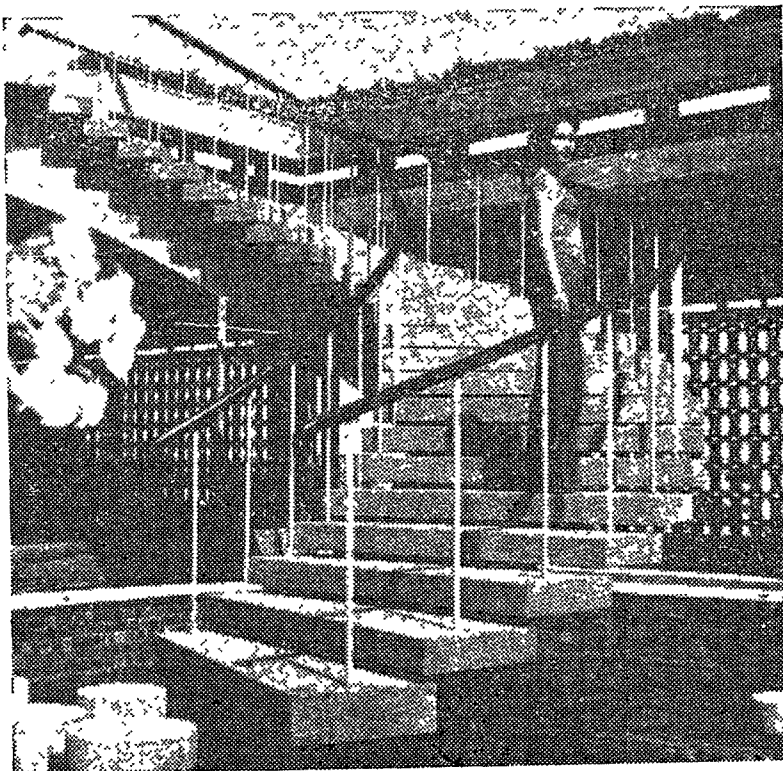
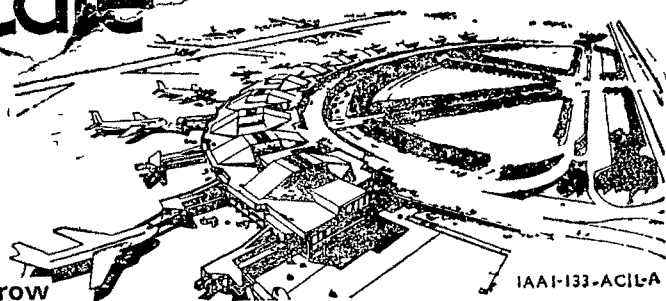
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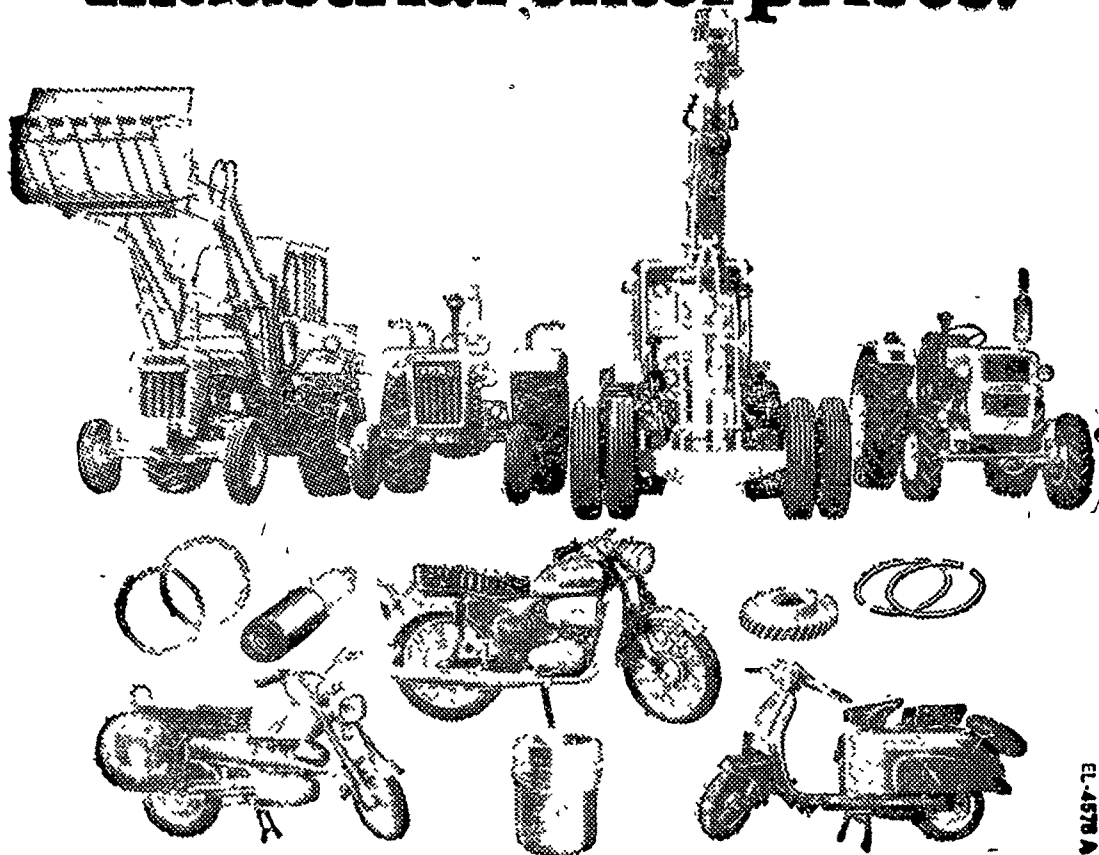
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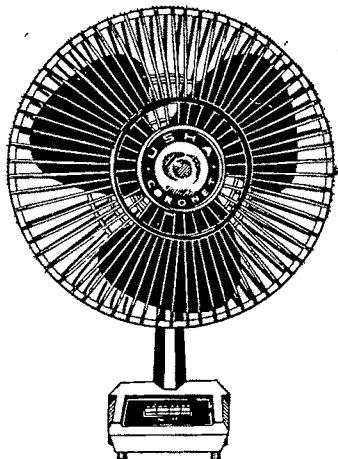
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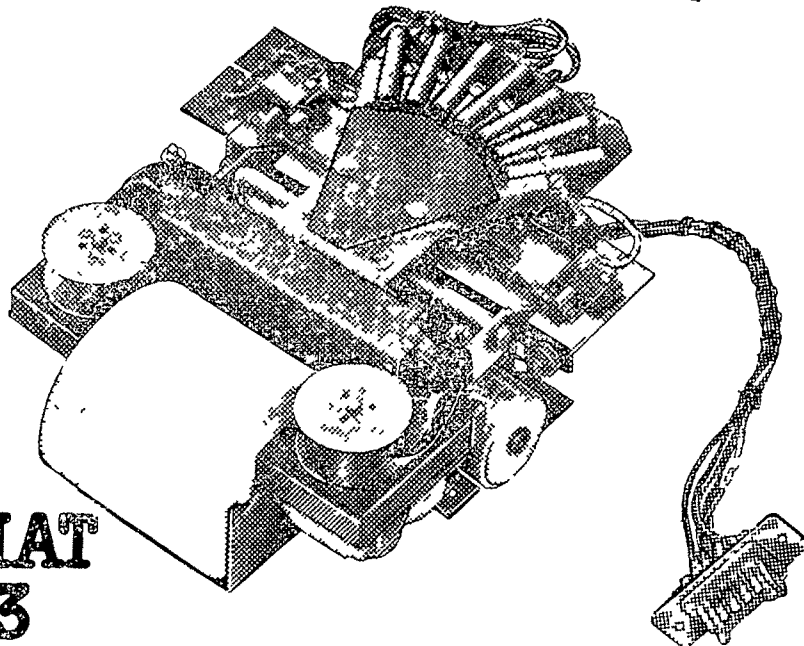


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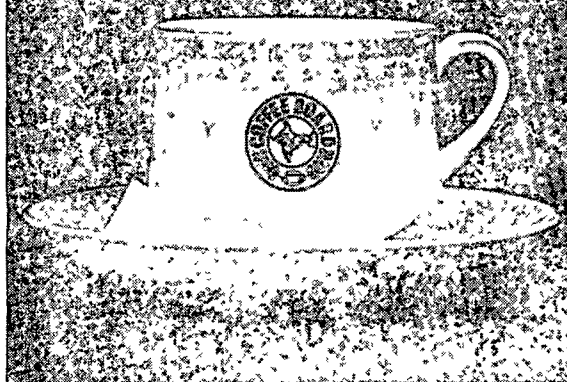


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How to make good coffee



THE DOS

ROASTING Under-roasting the coffee beans gives the brew a 'raw' taste. Over-roasting causes bitterness. Care should therefore be taken to roast the beans evenly to a golden brown colour.

GRINDING Make sure the coffee powder is not ground too fine or too coarse. Finely-ground powder tends to clog filter holes. If the powder is too coarse, the brew will be weak.

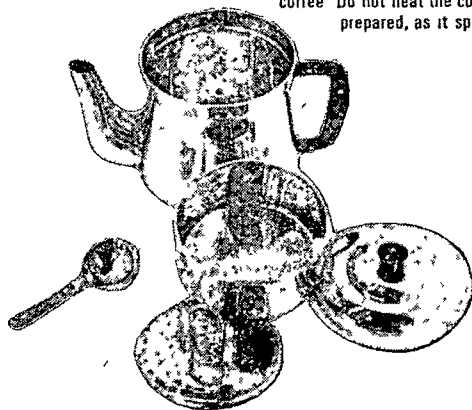
BREWING FOR BEST RESULTS USE A COFFEE BOARD FILTER.

Place filter inside the jug. Put the coffee powder (one spoon per cup) in the filter and spread evenly. Now place the plunger inside the filter, pressing down the powder lightly.

Pour freshly boiled water and close the lid. After 5 minutes the decoction is ready for use. Add milk and sugar to taste.

THE DONTs

Do not overboil the water. Do not overboil the milk used for making coffee. Do not heat the coffee after it is prepared, as it spoils the aroma.



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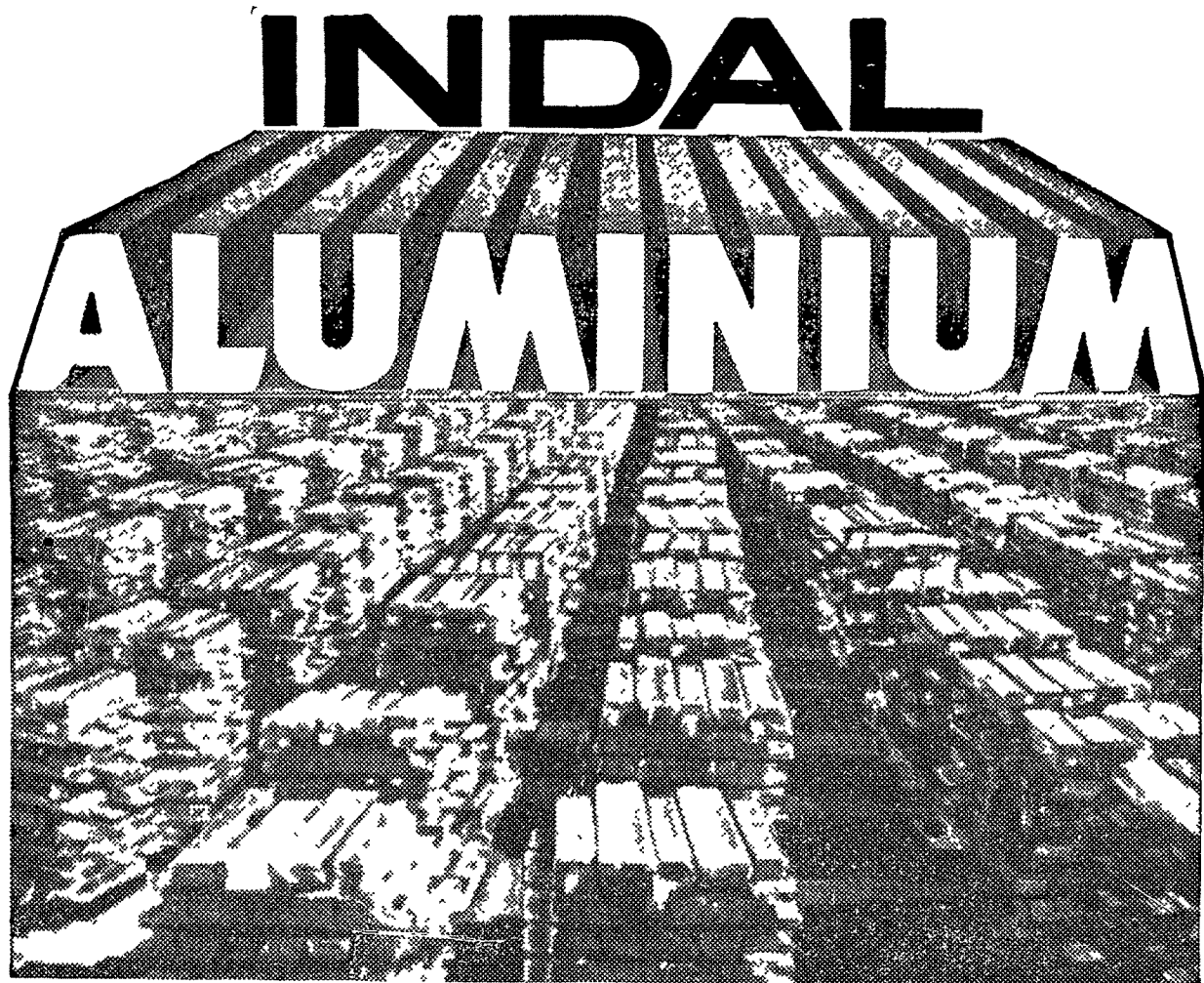
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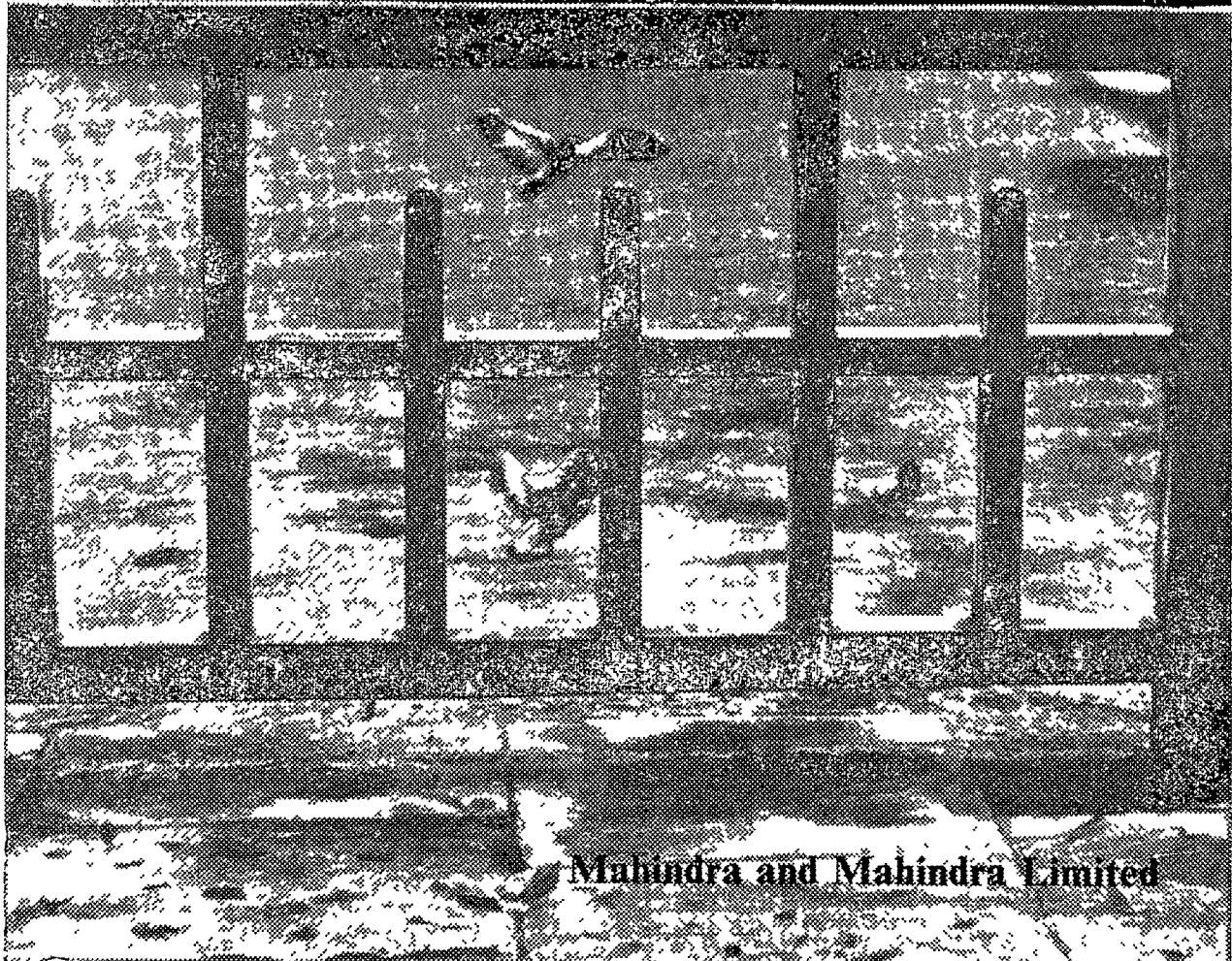


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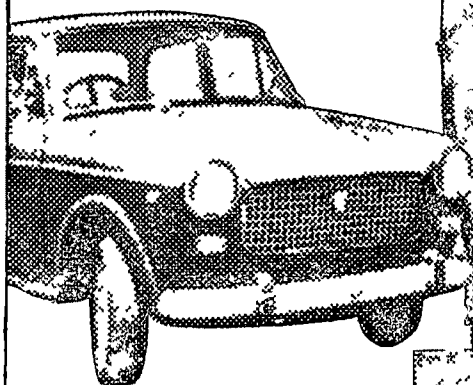
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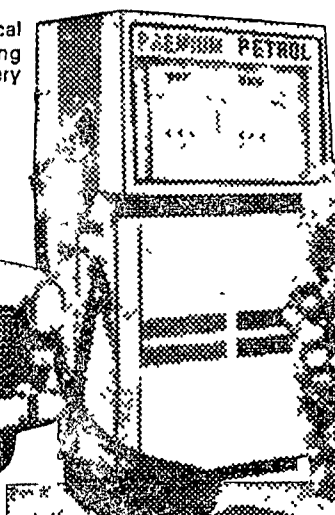
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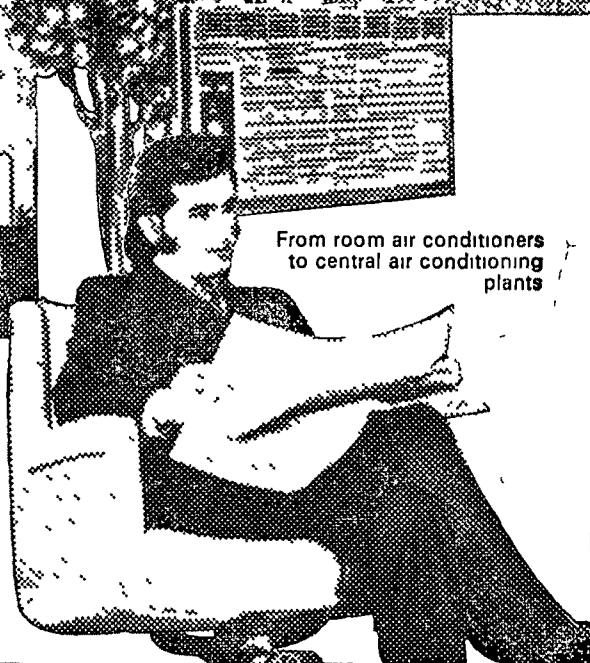
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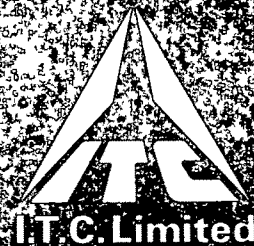
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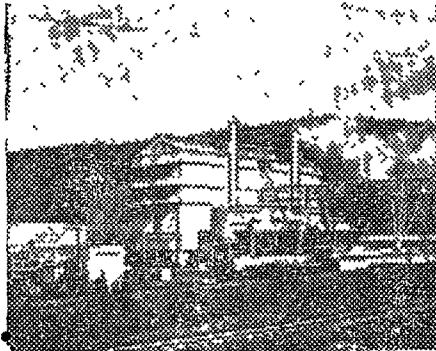
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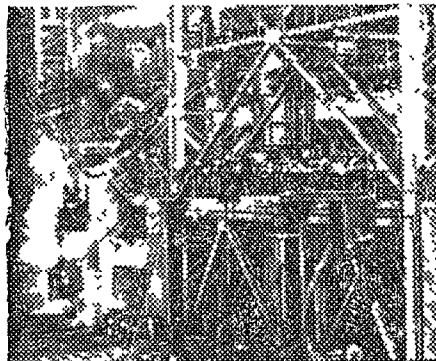


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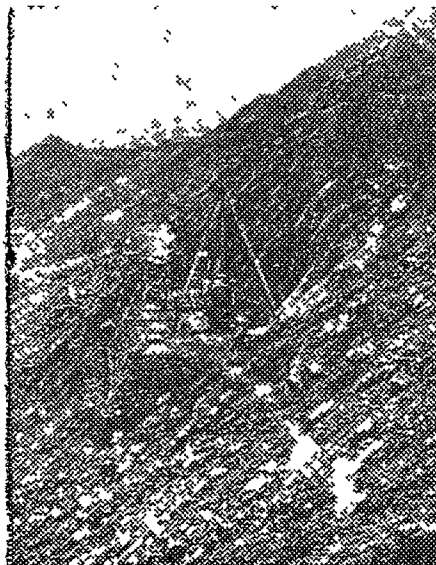
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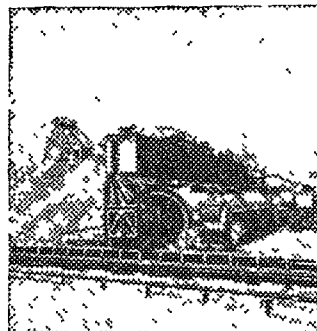
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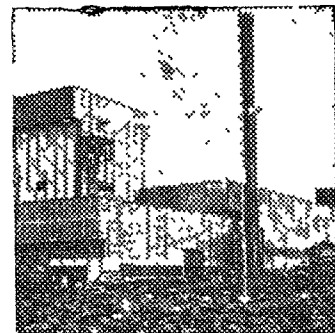
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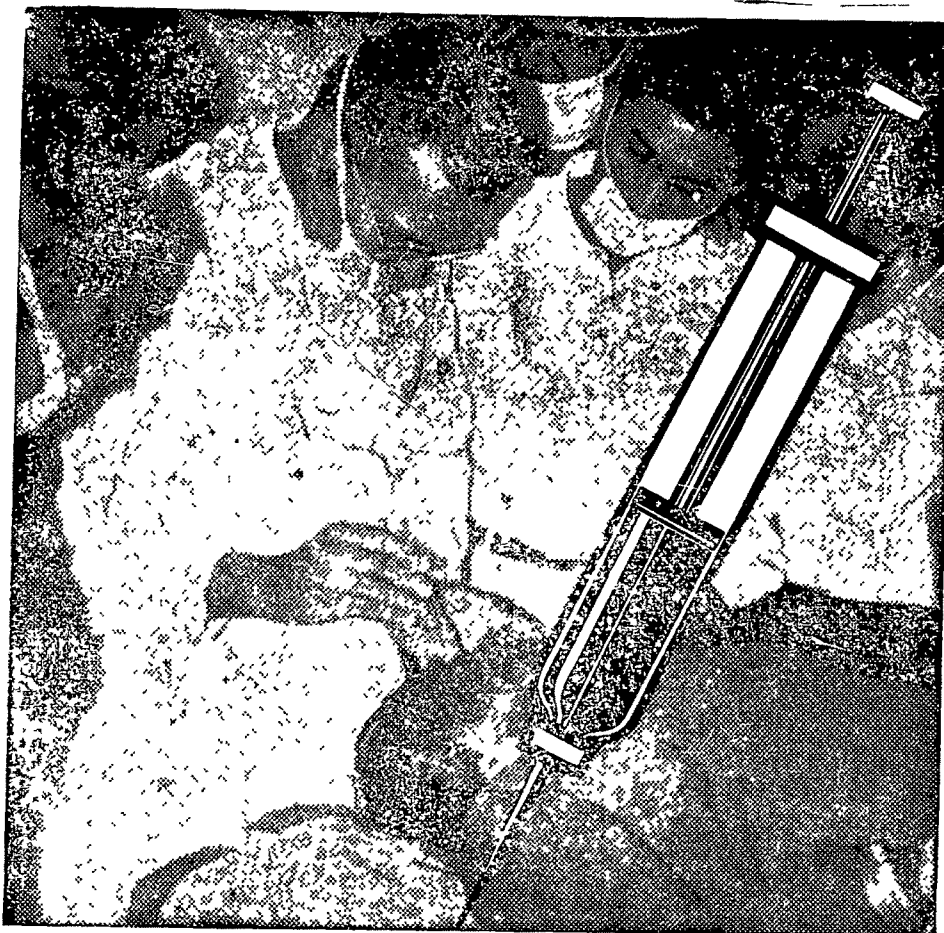


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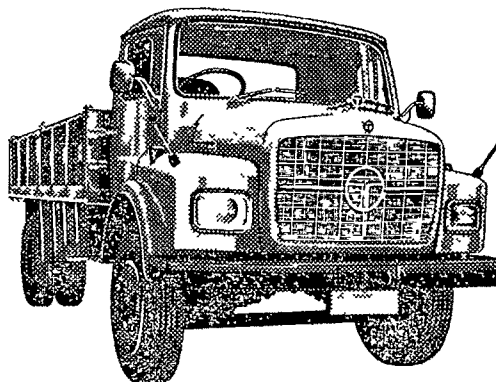
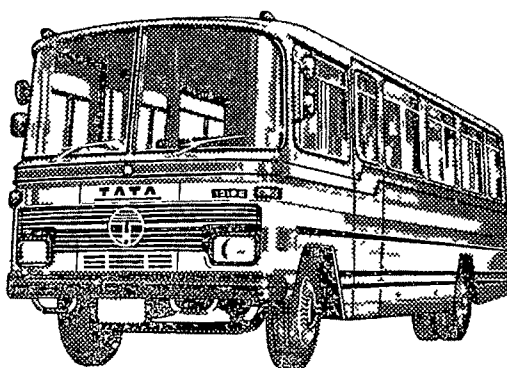
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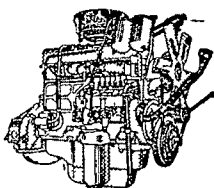
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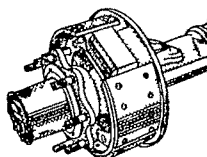


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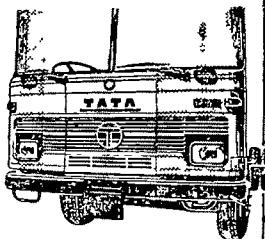


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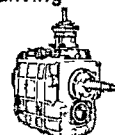
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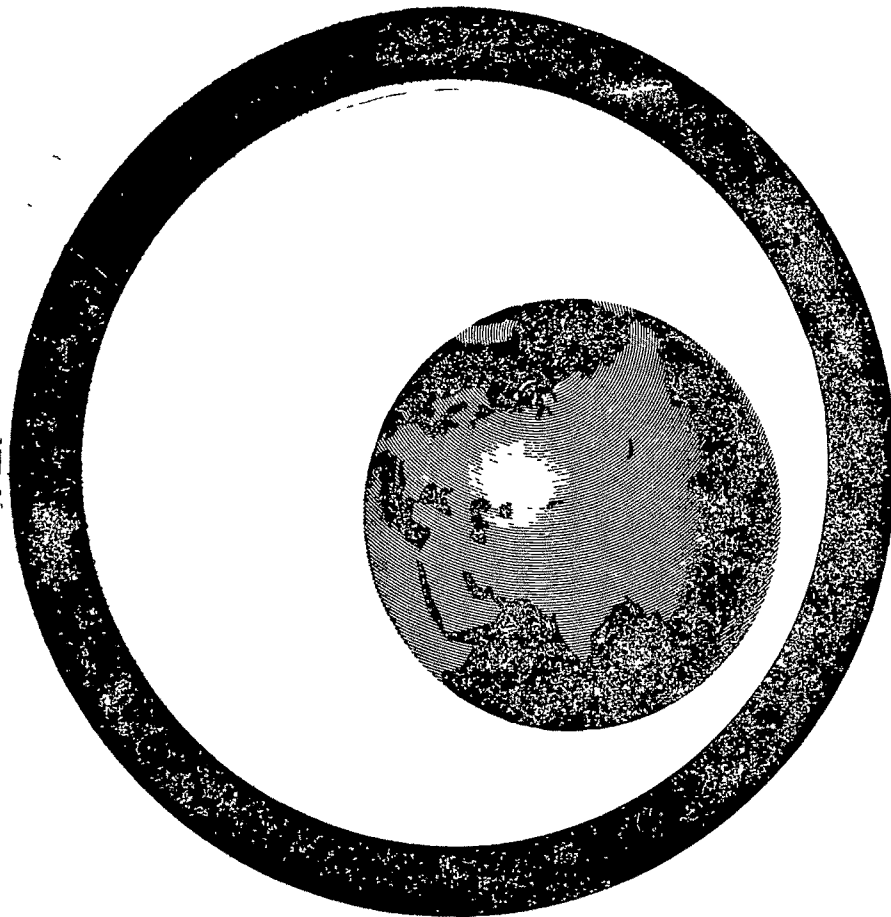
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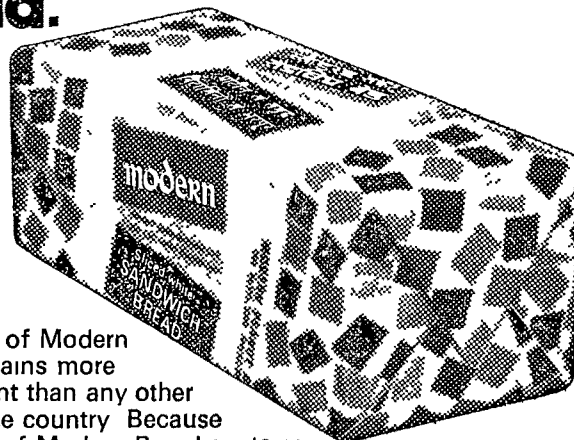
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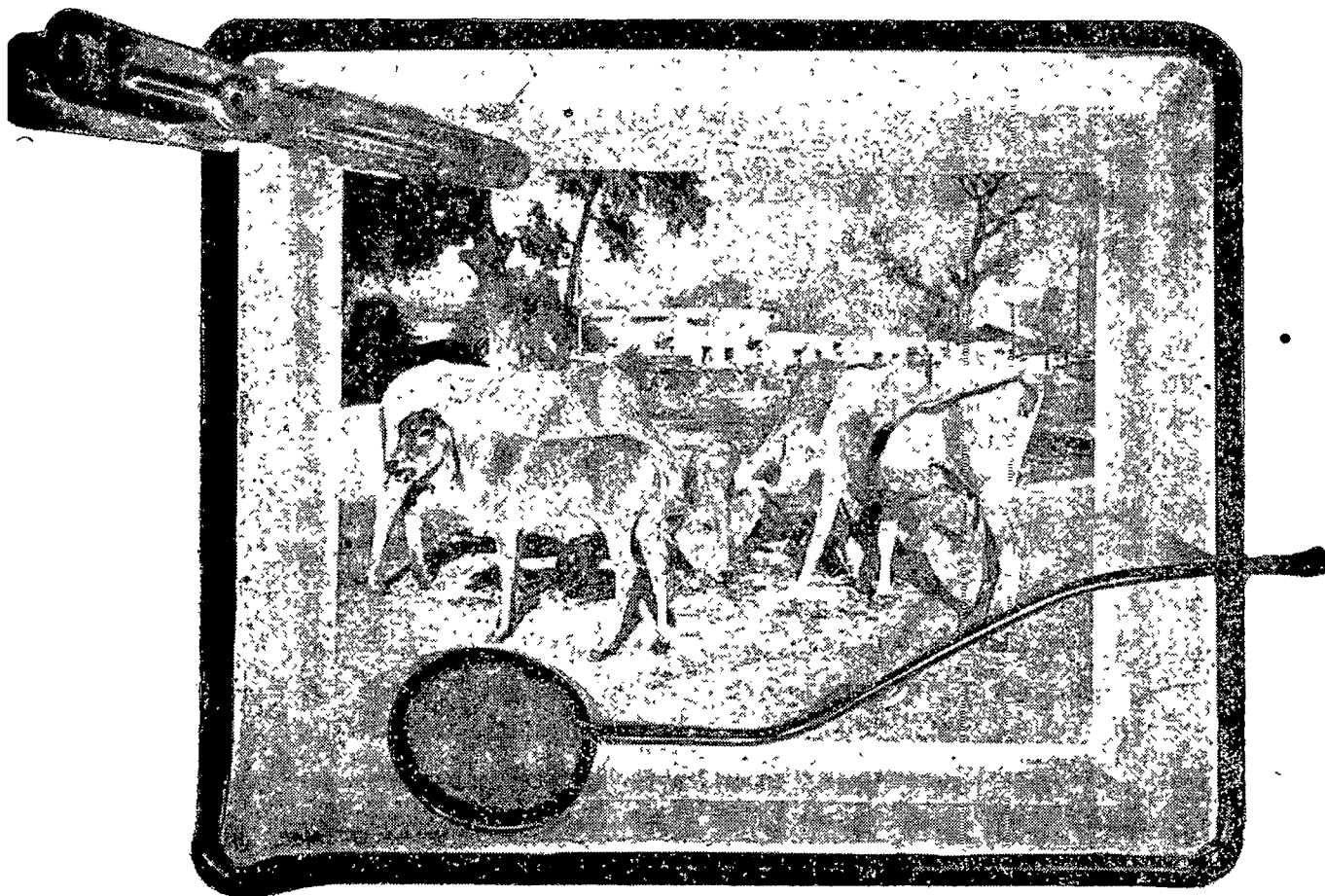
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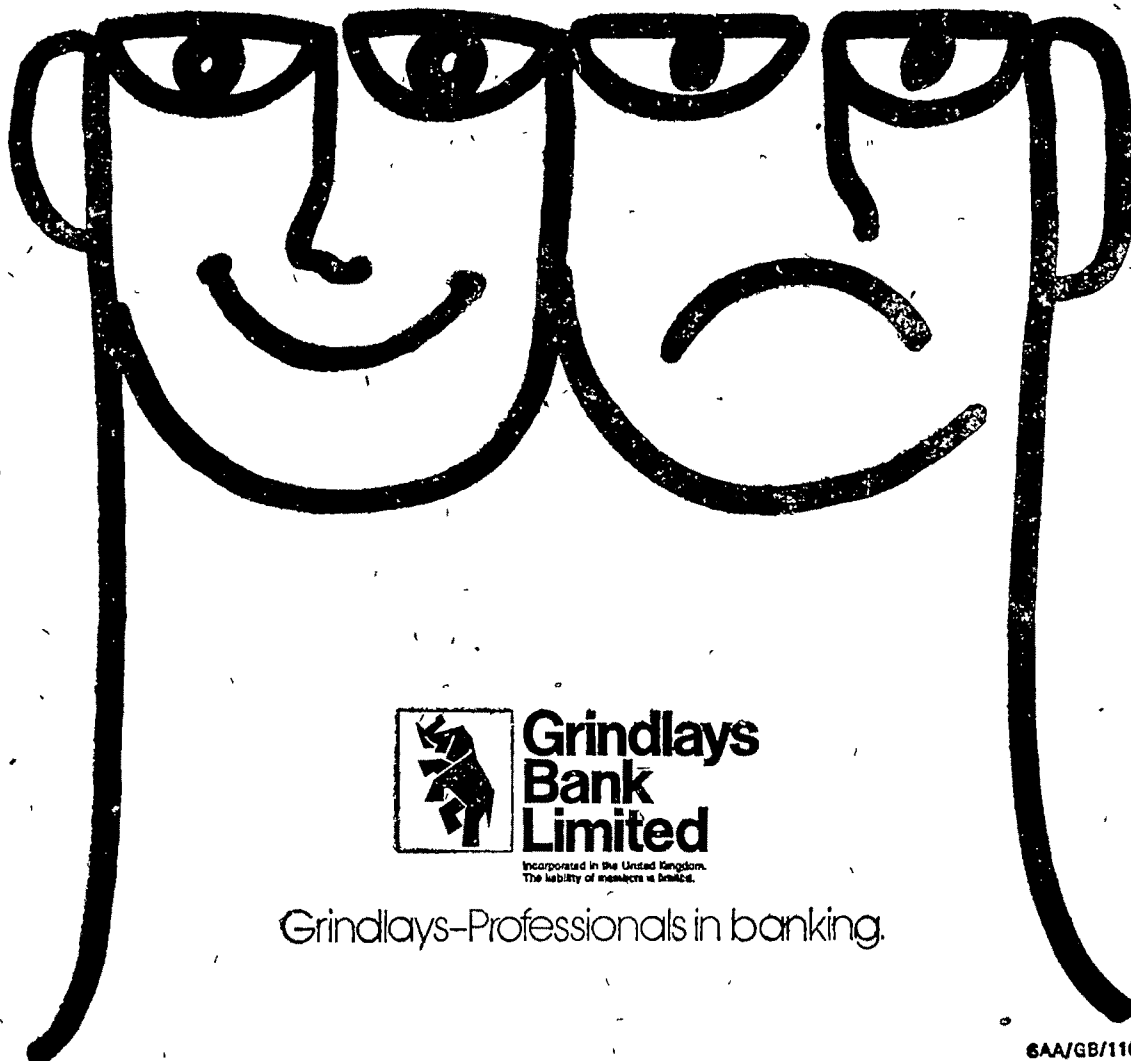
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a symposium
on the
year that was

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COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The emergency reviewed

DONNA SURI

1977 has been a publisher's dream: an information-starved public, a bumper crop of juicy rumours, a whole platoon of repressed journalists bursting to tell all. The last nine months has seen the greatest deluge of 'inside stories' that India has had since 1962. Furthermore, the publishers have brought out 'inside stories' to please every taste:

The Judgement, Kuldip Nayar, Vikas
Decline and Fall of Indira Gandhi, D R and Kamla Mankekar, Vision Books
Black Wednesday, Promilla Kalhan, Sterling

Two Faces of Indira Gandhi, Uma Vasudev, Vikas

All the Prime Minister's Men, Janardan Thakur, Vikas

An Eye to India, David Selbourne, Penguin Books

End of an Era, C S Pandit, Allied

Delhi Under Emergency, John Dayal, Ajay Bose, Ess Ess Publications

The Janata (People's) Struggle, Dharendra Sharma, Philosophy and Social Action

Experiments with Untruth, Michael Henderson Macmillan

The Games of Emergency, Abu Abraham, Vikas

some resemble novels, others are like film gossip columns and there are two or three serious books as well.

Unfortunately (with a couple of exceptions) their main offering is a rehash of newspaper reports that came out during the election campaign interspersed with interesting conjectures of the sort in which the old Connaught Circus Coffee House used to specialize: a grain of truth here, a good deduction there but supported by nothing more than the author's assertion. All but one of the books under review have been written by journalists and the authors have brought the same weaknesses to their books that one encounters in newspaper reporting. The books report a great deal of corruption, coercion and clearly illegal activities in the administrative agencies but they are rarely specific about how official procedures were so easily mocked.

Our journalists do not mind taking pot shots at government policy on the political level at which it is

made, but they prudently avoid probing the nitty-gritty of how those policies are implemented and by whom. There is little analysis of India's economic compulsions in the early 1970's Community-level reporting, or taking a good look at the 'grass-roots' is apparently infra-dig for newsmen employed on national dailies. The easiest and, most of the time, safest thing for journalists to do is watch 'The Palace'. Thus, the books under review contain few street scenes or landscapes but dwell on portrait miniatures of the court.

Another way in which journalists conserve their energies is by concentrating on 'who-said-what'. A glance at any day's morning paper will reveal the purely verbal orientation of news reporting: the most common headline being something like 'Party Chief Rejects Criticism' or 'Minister Urges Higher Target'. Apart from meeting the journalists' requirement of being easy and safe, this type of reporting also satisfies our perpetually campaigning politicians' hunger for publicity. The reader who hankers for hard news will get it only on the sports page.

The bulk of the Emergency books is being sold as 'inside stories'. In other words, their journalist authors are saying that they will tell (for a price) the full, true stories they did not publish in the course of their regular work. Very well, says the reader, Indian newspapers are under the many thumbs of monopoly capitalists and the Information Ministry and won't print what's really going on, the journalists are forced to seek out independent publishers if they want the Truth to be known. But after shelling out twenty-five or thirty rupees the reader is disappointed to find the same old stuff the newspapers carried long back with a generous padding of Press Club gup-shup which one doesn't know whether to credit or not. The country was plunged into dictatorship for nineteen months and the books to come out of it are mostly in the category of light bedtime reading!

The first to appear — when the Emergency's corpse was scarcely

cold — was *The Judgement, The Inside Story of the Emergency in India* by Kuldip Nayar. As most readers will know, Nayar writes for the *Indian Express* and was jailed briefly during the Emergency. *The Judgement* is the latest instalment in a series of 'inside stories' the author began about ten years ago with *Between the Lines*.

Although this book is basically a plain, straightforward chronological narrative recording what is commonly believed to have happened between the day Mrs. Gandhi was found guilty of electoral malpractices and the installation of the Janata government, it is Nayar's opening burst of creative writing that has drawn the most attention. His now famous depiction of Seshan and the teleprinters has damaged his credibility. Readers ask how he was able to describe the scene with such ring-side clarity, especially since Seshan (Mrs. Gandhi's secretary) denies he was even in Delhi that day. Nayar also treats his readers to closed-door midnight sessions with the Caucus, Intelligence Bureau reports, off-the-cuff epigrams of Sanjay and Bansi Lal and conversations at Madam's breakfast table. In the preface he says it's all true, checked and rechecked, but since he rarely mentions his sources, one's reaction to the book becomes a matter of faith — either you believe or you don't. Some of the information he relates simply boggles the mind, for instance his report that Mrs. Gandhi addressed an election meeting at Allahabad from a rostrum FIFTEEN METRES HIGH!

The 'inside' story that Nayar would indeed have the dope on, namely his own arrest, detention and the Tihar Jail scene, is very briefly treated. A footnote promises 'more in my forthcoming book *In Jail*'. He has collected many accounts of police atrocities but does not present them as anything more than individual cases where opportunity (MISA) meets inclination (inherent sadism of police). The action taken during the Emergency was aimed at much more than removing the disruptive opposition, it was an obvious and largely successful bid to instill terror in

the whole, mainly non-political, population. Why was this necessary?

The excerpts from protest speeches and underground writings during the Emergency are excellent. The reviewer has not seen them reproduced elsewhere and they are well worth reproducing and distributing as widely as possible even now. The speeches were made in Parliament by A.K. Gopalan, Era Sezhiyan, Mohan Dharja and G.V. Mavlankar: all stirring denunciations in the best traditions of parliamentary rhetoric. He includes a letter said to be circulated by the underground during November 1976 which is the most succinct and accurate description of the conditions and atmosphere in those days that has been made anywhere. Reading those few lines brings it all back so vividly that it hurts.

All in all then, Kuldip Nayar has made a good once-over-lightly of Emergency fact and folklore. Being first it has sold the most, but it is not more than a few threads of the real inside story.

The Manekars, D.R. and Kamla, announce their contribution, *Decline and Fall of Indira Gandhi*, as a Greek tragedy. Since Greek tragedies usually end with the good guy getting the axe, do they imply that Mrs. Gandhi was noble, pure and brave but got off the track somewhere? Whatever they mean by Greek tragedy, their Mrs. Gandhi is thoroughly reprehensible. Besides, as one reads through the emotion-packed and sermonizing pages of this book it is clear that the authors were more influenced by John Calvin than Euripides. This passage for instance: 'After an unrelieved gloom of nineteen traumatic months there is suddenly a dawn and the sun pierces through the thick lowering clouds and begins to shine, once again. And good triumphs over evil, and Indian democracy asserts itself and overthrows and banishes authoritarianism that threatened to be in our midst for ever.'

Oh vile objectivity, get thee hence!

The Manekars' version tallies with Nayar's in relating the main

events of the Emergency but they frequently surpass their colleague in the inclusion of details, such as how the opposition parties made inflated promises of satyagrahas to J.P. just before Emergency was declared, or what the technical faults were that kept Maruti off the roads. They are no better than Nayar however when it comes to identifying the sources of their information although one of their interesting tid-bits is that the best stories emanated from the security police posted at Mrs Gandhi's residence who had been alienated by the arrogant Sanjay

The authors devote four chapters to government interference in mass media and it is here that they are at their best. One wishes that they had not tried to write a general history of the Emergency but made a really extensive investigation of this topic instead. For these four chapters, at least, the authors are able to drop their melodramatic tone, which inclines one to believe they are writing what they genuinely know. They offer case studies of the government's attempts to 'tame' the news agencies, the *Indian Express*, the *Statesman* and even such a hitherto obscure publication as *Opinion*. At the end of their survey, the Mankekars deal with the question of why all but two of the big national dailies turned into such wee, timid, cowering, quivering beasts overnight. They lay the heaviest blame on the jute-press syndrome wherein a newspaper is merely one little component of a vast business empire.

This criticism may not be original but it is no less true. They also note creeping 'professional mercenarism' and decry the newsman's moral weakness in the face of worldly temptations dangled by the government. To correct both these tendencies the authors suggest

The journalist too must have an oath modelled on the famous Hippocratic oath

Perhaps what we need in this country is an institute for higher learning in journalism and mass media in general which will bring

home to the aspirants an intellectual and spiritual comprehension of a journalist's role in a modern society and a democratic State

It is possible that such an institute could better the competence of journalists but even if the place were run by Jesuits, infusing 'spiritual comprehension' would be highly problematic. Furthermore, the experience of the Indian public with sworn and certified high-mindedness is such that one can think of no better way to destroy whatever credibility the press may presently claim than by getting journalists to take an oath. The reviewer would be happy if newspapers were to hire more ordinary full time reporters to cover municipal and district-level news, especially in the 'hinter-lands', so that at least the inside pages might carry something besides stories of inner-party power capers and ministerial grand-standing.

Throughout the book the authors not only relate their version of events but frequently pause, out of editorial habit no doubt, to draw out lessons and morals for their presumably dim-witted readers. At the very end, in addition to cautioning the Janata Party not to blot their copy-book, the Mankekars considerably condense all their previous maxims into two easy-to-remember mottos (1) dictatorship is an unmixed evil and (2) no one can be trusted with absolute power and an open society and a free press are the only effective guarantees against abuse of power and authority. These are excellent morals for the future but if one wishes to prevent Emergencies from coming again, one will have to discover what made this one happen in the first place. One fears that the Mankekars' Morals will not be much use against the economic factors or the domestic and international pressures that existed in 1975 and are still very much around today.

Mrs Promilla Kalhan has contributed another version of the Emergency nightmare in which Mrs Gandhi is not the evil old witch as per *Decline and Fall* but a captive queen deluded and manipulated by a gang of low villains. The book's leitmotif is 'Oh, What happened', as

though a brick out of the blue had dropped on the author's head. Well, perhaps that's what happened. Certainly, it may be claimed that Mrs Kalhan, biographer of Kamla Nehru, stood close enough to Mrs Gandhi's establishment to have sustained some injury when the edifice collapsed.

The author presents a synthesis of newspaper reports, interviews with politicians, vignettes from the *nasbandi*, demolition and MISA and a collage of clippings. Her conclusion yes, it was really terrible but 'Even if Mrs Gandhi's clear aim was to stick to power despite the Allahabad Court judgement, she drew up welfare plans for the people to justify her action. She did believe that she could pull the country up and one of the reasons in her own eyes, for propping up Sanjay, was that she believed that she could thereby ensure the continuation of her policies. But the blood-is-thicker-than-water feeling was very much there. The idea took root and began to flower unchecked in the absence of the relentless process of democracy. Sycophants did the rest. Soon Sanjay pitched his own camp within the Prime Minister's house and it grew larger and larger.'

The author presents a touching picture of the suddenly unemployed Prime Minister on the night election results were announced. 'Those who visited No 1 Safdarjung Road on the late evening of the 20th say Mrs Gandhi took the news calmly, perhaps more calmly than the visitors. When one Congresswoman, an AICC office-bearer, in a fit of emotion offered to part with half her salary every month, Mrs Gandhi shrank, perhaps for the first time realizing the full import of the evening's event. She would, she is reported to have pointed out, be entitled to Rs 500 per month pension as a former M.P. and there were the royalties of her father's books. Moreover she herself could take to writing.'

Or perhaps give tuitions or set up a little poultry business on the farm. Mrs. Kalhan's own guess was that the ex-P.M. would ride off into a rustic sunset, find herself a 'cottage with an orchard, probably in

Himachal'. (Here is a good example of how rumours, though entirely untrue yet contain a clue to their origin, surely someone has misheard or twisted a remark made by Mrs. Gandhi concerning a certain Party's apple CARTS and not apple-TREES.)

For Sanjay also the author has more sorrow than anger. an intelligent boy, she says, but very impressionable, spoiled by the household and led astray by bad company. And who was the evil genius behind a merely obnoxious brat? Bansi Lal! The author brings to light an unsuspected motive for Mrs. Gandhi's sudden calling for elections. she wanted to get rid of Bansi Lal. Just dropping him like any other minister would have made her son angry (As to why Mrs. Gandhi would have hesitated to make Sanjay angry the author has quoted Ambika Soni's allegation that Sanjay knows certain things). Therefore, Mrs. Gandhi ordered the election hoping Bansi Lal would lose, while she herself, having regained the hearts of the masses, would be able to re-emerge as her old cultured, enlightened, progressive, benign despotic self again. In Mrs. Kalhan's version that remarkable woman, even though misled by flatterers, isolated by scheming underlings and threatened with blackmail by her own son, could still summon the courage to make a desperate gamble to free India from the Caucus. The Congress was wiped out and she succeeded Samson-like in burying the Caucus under the ruins.

Mrs. Kalhan has succeeded where the Manekars failed: it is she who has produced the Greek tragedy.

In contrast to the *Black Wednesday* version which applied the tar brush liberally to everyone except Mrs. Gandhi, another family biographer has come out with a book that axes the queen but spares the courtiers. *Two Faces of Indira Gandhi* has elicited numerous comments on the two faces of author Uma Vasudev, since her previous work belonged to the *bhakti* literature of pre-Emergency days. However, compared to Mrs. Kalhan's description, *Two Faces* is still a more flattering portrait — assuming

Mrs. Gandhi does not mind being portrayed as wicked but would hate being pictured as weak. In any case, Uma Vasudev writes very well and there is certainly a place in Indian journalism for writers like her — in *Blitz* perhaps.

As Uma Vasudev depicts the situation. Back in 1969 through 1971 Mrs. Gandhi veered to the Left in order to defeat the Right, then she exploited rifts in the Left to keep them from taking over (Mrs. Vasudev calls this parallel politics). After 1971, the economy was going from bad to worse and the IMF was pressurizing her to adopt more western-style policies. On the domestic scene big business and vested interests were no less powerful than before, making it necessary for her to whisper 'no change' to the fat cats every time she shouted 'socialism' to the masses. Meanwhile there was the Gujarat crisis, the railway strike and J.P.'s movement in Bihar. Things were getting altogether out of hand but Mrs. Gandhi was not personally threatened until the Allahabad judgement unseated her. She hesitated just long enough to observe the behaviour of her party colleagues when they thought the *gaddi* might possibly be up for grabs and she then neatly declared the Emergency.

Uma Vasudev's account is fairly commonplace up to this point but with the entry of Sanjay her interpretation becomes speculative. She says: 'one must substitute Indira Gandhi whenever Sanjay's name comes in because he was the mask for her other face — the second face.'

'For a long time in the public mind and in that of the Congress Party itself, there remained the illusion that Mrs. Gandhi was innocent of Sanjay's frenetic drives. But no matter which sphere one looked into with care, there was evidence of her initiative, knowledge and political will. Everywhere he seemed to be running counter to her, but everywhere it was a parallel course. Each time he was used as the testing pilot in the political scene.'

Sanjay could not have perpetrated all the mischief on his own, she

argues, because. 'Sanjay could never have acquired the authority to have the Delhi Administration, down from the lieutenant governor, obeying his orders as they did in the capital. Nor was he political enough to conduct such a calculated erosion of the Left all over India, as happened during the Emergency, unless he was guided by his mother.'

In Uma Vasudev's account, keeping with her theory of parallel politics, Indira would personally address the Left and speak to the Right through Sanjay. 'Sanjay, it seems, was Indira's answer to the ideologues, the harassment she felt at being continually pestered, her own growing compulsion to show as much achievement and as quickly as possible to offset the effect of the judgement. Sanjay was Indira's answer to her guilt.'

The author's view is plausible but one can't help but wonder what on earth could have led Mrs. Gandhi to unleash Sanjay on her carefully cultivated mass base, the Harijans and Muslims. The fact that she did it surely reflects more than guilty feelings, something closer to a political death wish. If the truth of all this ever comes out, it is likely to be much stranger than fiction.

Two Faces is a disorganized jumble of interviews, anecdotes and background information and as one leisurely goes through the bundle of dirty linen, some interesting items are discovered — not secrets but small details which are probably not widely known outside the circle of full-time political buffs. For instance, Rukhsana Sultana's real name is Minoo Bimbit. And Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Rajni Patel and D.K. Barooah had written to Mrs. Gandhi in January 1975 urging her to declare an emergency. She is the only author who has a good word for Mohammed Yunus who emerges from her description as a rather modest chap.

Uma Vasudev also gives the story of an anti-Emergency Congress member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council, U.P. Singh, who went underground, was subsequently picked up by the police who then

tried to torture him into giving false evidence in a cooked-up plot. Singh was asked to confess that he had bought arms to kill Mrs. Gandhi at the behest of Jagjivan Ram, but he wouldn't oblige. This episode has not been reported elsewhere. What a murky atmosphere prevails today — so many serious allegations have been made in this and other books but they all remain simply floating in the air. If the above story, for example, is true why have no criminal charges been made? If it's not true then let some credible authority come forth and say so

The next book, *All the Prime Minister's Men* is for those who just can't get enough of that 'arre yaar' sort of writing and are still not satisfied even after listening in to Uma Vasudev's chatty tete-a-tete. The author, Janardan Thakur, who is on the staff of *Searchlight* and frequently contributes to *Sunday* magazine, relates in his preface that some high-brow editor had pointed out that the subjects of his investigation were such small people. Well, as mentioned at the outset of this review, most of the Emergency books can be called miniature portraits, so here is a perfect congruence of form and content.

The character sketches of *Prime Minister's Men* lend credence to that famous remark Indira is supposed to have made to Oriana Fallaci, 'What can I do? I'm surrounded by idiots'. The picture Thakur draws of Bansi Lal, for instance, shows a man who always seemed to pride himself on an absolute lack of discretion. Once he graduated to the Prime Minister's inner circle, he went hog wild and pig crazy (to use a suitably rural expression). In varying degrees, the same may be said for V.C. Shukla, D.K. Barooah, Yashpal Kapoor, R.K. Dhavan, Om Mehta, Navin Chawla, Jagmohan and Tamta. Remembering those nineteen months one is struck by the irony that while every bill-board trumpeted 'iron will, clear vision, strictest discipline', what the government really evinced was frantic postures, superficial programmes and utter lack of restraint.

The case histories of Thakur's book fall into a common pattern.

The men of Indira's regime puffed themselves up to fill the various clichéd roles of a tinpot dictatorship. Their enthusiastic identification as apparatchiks was so complete that they lost whatever political sense they may have had. In fact, the minions were so deluded that when Madam forgot that she was running a banana republic and called for elections, not one of them had the commonsense to make a run for the border with as much as they could carry. The author's explanation is that they had told so many lies and faked so many demonstrations of mass affection that they had come to believe their own nonsense.

This book's account contradicts other versions of how the elections came to be called. According to the author, 'If anybody could be thanked for the decision to hold elections it was Sanjay Gandhi — and his mindless cronies like Narayan Dutt Tewari'. Om Mehta, he says, had tried to tell Sanjay in January that intelligence reports showed it would not be safe to hold the elections. Sanjay, convinced that the country was solidly behind him, was furious with this assessment and thereafter RAW submitted a cooked report in favour of the poll. Final clearance was given after Mrs. Gandhi had consulted a special three-man panel of the country's top astrologers who pronounced an early poll most 'propitious' (If she had consulted only one astrologer that would have been superstitious, consulting three is empirical in keeping with the citizen's duty to promote the scientific attitude.)

All the Prime Minister's Men is the most sensational account to appear so far. (Thakur was late on the market and needed juicier stuff to compete with early arrivals.) He rarely succumbs to the fad for amateur psycho-analysis (except for a few paragraphs on Mrs. Gandhi's hormones and home life). Instead he concentrates on good old dirt — or as he puts it 'the dark illicit subterranean lives' of our public men. He's scooped a lot of it and even though the author claims to have desisted from publishing his

most lurid discoveries, much of the book may still be deemed scurrilous.

An *Eye to India*, by David Selbourne is very different from all the foregoing books. It is really more descriptive than analytical and more diatribe than polemic. His topics are not the personalities at the top, or the blows and dodges of power politics, or just those nineteen months. *An Eye to India* concerns the deceit, cynicism and corruption that the author believes has characterized Indian political life since Independence. He argues his points by contrasting the sordid daily realities of the masses with the perpetual smoke-screen of ersatz Maoist slogans generated by the Congress Party. The book is documented to the hilt with 2,141 footnotes and 65 pages of appendices.

Selbourne's book is difficult to read. He mixes jumbled surrealistic word-pictures with long tangled sentences of exposition making *An Eye to India* resemble a cross between *Finnegan's Wake* and a pamphlet of Party Literature. For example: 'More important is that the process of political constriction not only compresses political differentiation (while deepening other forms of contradiction), but tends to dissolve remaining distinction — both of principle and person — in widening areas of the devastation of a nation.'

'Above a tangle of greying greenery and a rubbishy garden, the fading Victorian lady leans against stucco on an abandoned balcony, arm raised (wrist broken, fingers missing) pointing in a long lost direction'

'Stockaded shacks are of wood, straw and rag; staked fences, cloven, rags upon a bed-trestle, and an awning; hangings, light shining through sacking and wicker.'

'Night is falling. The harvest moon rains fire, strange this fate says Vidyapati'

Whatever all that means, readers in this country may feel somewhat gratified to note that it's not only

our university graduates who can't write a simple English sentence.

The book is also characterized by an awesome overkill. For example, it does not need twenty paragraphs to demonstrate that Indira Gandhi made contradictory statements. (In fact, so much space and indignation was devoted to the hyperboles of the Prime Minister and her party that the reader is apt to conclude that no one has ever taken the Congress and its leaders so seriously as Englishmen.) Finally, there is the pervasive tone of disgust which, one grants, is appropriate to the bald truths cited, but which distracts from the interpretation he is trying to present and hints at some psychological problems of the author. His attempts to induce a similar nausea in his readers are heavy-handed and likely to be resented.

Hacking off the excess verbiage, extrapolating here and there and rounding off the particulars into some manageable generalizations, the author's view of the Emergency is as follows. The conflict between Mrs. Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan had no ideological basis but was the showdown of two rival populisms. The declaration of Emergency was the result of factional politics finally touching rock bottom. Mrs. Gandhi's main problem was the factions in her own party, each keenly watching its chance to either take over or at least improve its relative position. After the Allahabad judgement more than one hundred Congressmen were grouping to ask her to step down. It was not Opposition-inspired strikes and disturbances that prompted the Emergency so much as the ruling faction's perception that its political machine was about to fly completely out of control. Now, extrapolating a bit, in order to control the revolt inside the Congress, the ruling clique had to control the rebels' potential allies, the Opposition. At the same time, since the country had a liberal, democratic parliamentary system with its customary civil liberties which the governing circle did not want or did not dare to summarily abolish, it was not possible to keep the Opposition down without keeping

everybody down. Mrs. Gandhi's group swept away every right but that to private property — but legally, through Constitutional amendments. The government's iron hand sufficiently terrorized the already vulnerable general public but only forced the political challenges from what was left of the Opposition as well as the Congress Party factions, underground. No problems were solved. Nor could the iron hand bring about economic revival. The governing powers steadily lost their grip and were forced to seek 'popular' legitimization.

Selbourne's perception of the situation differs from the observations of other authors in the stress he gives to the Congress Party's internal power struggles. He also deals with two facets of the Emergency which other books have touched on only slightly or not at all, namely, the confused opportunism of the CPI during the Emergency and the assault on the trade unions.

Like Selbourne, C. S. Pandit views the Emergency as the culmination of years of steady decline in the nation's political morality, but he does not discount the role of Right vs. Left in the Indian political dynamic nor does he dismiss entirely the idea of foreign subversion as baseless paranoia. His book, *End of an Era* is the most sober and detached analysis, so far, of the events that led up to the Emergency.

The author has no illusions about the objects or players of the political game. The Indira Gandhi of his account is neither saint nor devil but simply one politician among many. Her most glaring weakness as a politician was her inability to deal with criticism. Thus she was at her best in confrontations that required her to stand her ground, such as her fight with the Syndicate or in the Bangla Desh war, but she could not adjust to situations that required a creative compromise, such as the Bihar movement. As it used to be said of the U S A., she never lost a war or won a peace.

Although Pandit says he never dreamed Indira would turn into a dictator, his book traces the beginning of some of the worst features

of the Emergency back to the early days of her Prime Ministership. The idea that persons are more important than institutions, which attained full flower in the phrase 'Indira is India', was launched soon after the 1970 election. It was the justification for favouring 'committed' judges and civil servants. Causes surrounded her from the beginning, only the calibre of men declined drastically. Corruption in the Congress Party, he believes, was raised to a fine art by Lalit Narayan Misra, while Sanjay began interfering in political and administrative matters about eight years ago.

The author's account of Mrs. Gandhi's eleven years in power shows that she could only maintain her supremacy by undercutting other faction leaders and out-promising the Opposition to win mass support, but each time she did either, she only gained time at the cost of manoeuvring space. As crisis piled on crisis, she soon ran out of bridges to burn and could turn to nothing but violence to save her position — violence to the Constitution, to the Congress Party, to the common man.

Regarding the threat of foreign subversion, Pandit states that Mrs. Gandhi's constant reference to conspiracies and external threats was intended to discredit her opponents and distract attention from domestic problems. However, he has noted a curious similarity between the pattern of events in this country and a four-stage programme for 'symbolic subversion' devised in the London School of Economics a few years back. The four steps are (1) encourage corruption in order to draw the condemnation of the people, (2) promote groups to campaign for active public opinion against the establishment, (3) launch credible steps of public action — possibly centering around a court case and (4) goad public unrest to violence culminating in revolution. Whether the U S was trying out the new recipe in India or not would be extremely difficult to prove. Pandit unequivocally states, however, that the victory of the Janata Party has made outside manipulation impossible. Judging from the good sense

the author has displayed in the rest of the book, one feels that he knows very well that the causes of popular agitation did not disappear overnight on March 20th and is making such a statement simply as a gesture of goodwill.

The analysis of the influence of foreign affairs on India's domestic politics is often interesting for its complexity of logic. His explanations of how the U.S. used the oil price hike to its advantage and what motivated the West Pakistanis to institute their reign of terror in Bangla Desh reveal plots so devious that they out-Prince Machiavelli himself. The American reaction to the Emergency which the author describes is probably quite close to the mark and rather amusing, since the country was under dictatorship the U.S., which has received so many moral lectures from India, had the pleasure of retaliating in kind, at the same time Indira won the flinty hearts of Wall Street by controlling Indian labour and the Emergency was hailed by those circles for putting the country on the Road to Progress; and finally, a practical discovery was made that the Emergency had streamlined corruption so that while the amount of grease needed became much greater the number of out-stretched palms decreased so that multi-national executives could conclude their business in a fraction of the time formerly required.

Whereas *End of An Era* provides the political background for understanding the Emergency, for a close look at how the Emergency was implemented one must turn to the thoroughly professional investigative reporting of John Dayal and Ajoy Bose. The material was gathered throughout the Emergency period by the journalist authors in the course of their regular city coverage for *Patriot*. The two main subjects of their book, *Delhi Under Emergency*, are demolitions and sterilizations but woven into their account of the specific happenings are many acute insights into the attitudes and working conditions of police and civil servants — factors that made 'excesses' inevitable then and 'abuses' common now.

The authors explain the facts of official life in Delhi in 1975 thus: 'The officers ruling Delhi were fiercely jealous of each other. And not without reason. Favours were given them in the most unreasonable manner and most disproportionately Jagmohan had been bestowed with a Padma Shri while others who thought they had as much if not more worth had been ignored. The officers were finding that the only way to maintain the pre-eminence of one's position was to try and cuddle up to the son of the big boss. Over the past two or three years, the officers had been busy consolidating their power. For want of a determined political leadership in the Capital, officials had succeeded beyond even their own expectations. They had consolidated their power, and established their authority, so much so that even the political hierarchy had found itself increasingly dependent on the bureaucratic bosses of the DDA and the Corporation and the Delhi State Small Scale Industries Development Corporation for their political sustenance. Those in the know therefore were not very surprised if they saw the de facto police chief (P.S. Bhinder) or the head of a civic body paying courteous and humble respects to Sanjay Gandhi... That was the way to become more powerful.'

Thus one may picture the Delhi Administration as a gigantic bulldozer the brakes of ward-level political mediation gone, fueled by inter-service rivalries and with Sanjay Gandhi at the controls. The authors point out that although officials are now claiming to have committed illegal and inhumane acts out of fear, the real reasons were greed and ambition. Their relationship with Sanjay Gandhi was a mutually agreeable one, each side encouraging the other to greater acts of arrogance and cruelty in the name of work-more-talk-less.

Delhi Under Emergency describes how the police and civic officials, accountable to no one but Sanjay, were able to develop super-efficient modus operandi to meet the tasks set for them. Working in cooperation, they perfected the blitzkrieg method of slum clearance. All possible leverage was applied to

garner 'cases' for vasectomy — in schools, hospitals, offices and factories. The people ceased to matter except as contributions to various quotas and additions to the statistics.

Two chapters, 'The Dinosaurs' and 'Primeval Slush' describe the functioning of the police in general and the little alterations here and there that made the police even more responsive to the wishes of the ruling circle. Just as in the civic administration, new channels of authority were created to enforce the will of Sanjay Gandhi, officially superior officers in the Delhi police were reduced to figure-heads and their powers passed on to specially appointed subordinates. This was the case of DIG P.S. Bhinder, whose appointment at the instance of Sanjay provoked resentment both in those officers senior to him and in the lower ranks. The opposition did not prevent him from living up to the Youth Leader's expectations, however. And just as the civic authorities found short cuts to obtain results, the police, too swiftly dispensed with the inconveniences inherent in 'due process'. How much so is illustrated in detail in the author's account of the 'Dacoit Sunder' episode. As an interesting aside, the authors relate that the various *thanas* in Delhi are rated for their money spinning capacities and bribes for transfer of police officers to the more lucrative posts are more or less fixed.

The best summing up is done by the authors themselves: 'We want people to understand the processes of the Emergency. There was political, cultural and bureaucratic bankruptcy beforehand—police brutality is nothing new and the arbitrary powers of the State are deep-rooted. They haven't vanished: we have the same corruption, the same bureaucracy, the same police. To many people, the Emergency was a short, bad dream. This book puts on record that it's not so.'

The next book in this survey presents the Emergency as it looked at a time when the power of Indira and Sanjay showed no sign of ever ending and the opponents carried on

their struggle at considerable risk not only to liberty but to life. Other books which have been reviewed here, no matter how horrible the scene recreated by their notes and memories, have been essentially recollections after the event, but in reading this volume, *The Janata's (People's) Struggle* by Professor Dharendra Sharma of J.N.U., plunges the reader back into the uncertainties, fears, and the stealthy, persistent acts of defiance which we knew during those days. To continue the analogy, this book is not a painting but a series of candid photographs

The bulk of the book is a very valuable collection of documents, speeches, resistance literature and correspondence relating to the underground struggle, prison conditions and the emergence of the Janata Party. Aside from giving a picture of the Emergency in its opponents' own words, Professor Sharma has argued that the Emergency was a crisis which forced a change in the functioning of the political elite. In the past, he states, personalities have transcended programmes, parties and policies but in the course of the Emergency—both inside and outside the jails—the opposition leaders discovered that their former egotisms were counter-productive in the struggle against their oppressors, and, most significantly, their followers had attained a new political consciousness that would not tolerate the weakening divisiveness of former days. He views the Janata struggle as a process by which the people's power directs the political elite to alter its perception and policies. In all this, the most active agents were the youth.

His other thesis is 'even if there were no excesses, no sterilization campaigns, the people were on the move to overthrow the corrupt, inept, irresponsible government of the Congress and CPI axis... The ruling elite was on the defensive. Initiative was entirely with the Opposition forces. The authoritarian measures were inherent in such a socio-political dynamics India's turning to dictatorship and attempting to destroy the Constitution was the logical outcome of policies

initiated by her father two decades ago.'

Here then is a source book for scholars as well as an informative book which rounds up our factual knowledge of the Emergency. To reach the general reader, however, this book requires access to larger distribution channels than it presently has and it could do with a better title.

In November, *Experiments with Untruth* by English journalist Michael Henderson appeared. It gives a greater sampling of foreign press reports during the Emergency but otherwise it contains almost nothing new, not even a fresh conjecture. The author calls attention to the remarkable similarity between 'Why Emergency,' a bit of 1975 government propaganda and a British pamphlet 'Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances', circa 1943. It is an interesting discovery, but considering the many other outrages committed by Mrs. Gandhi's government, plagiarism seems a rather trifling charge. All told, the book would have seemed about average had it appeared in June or July; now it's too stale. The book is badly printed, unworthy of Macmillan's.

Back in August or September of 1976, Abu's cartoons disappeared from the front page of *Indian Express*. One week passed, then another — no Abu. People said 'they've hauled him in. He got away with his digs for so long only because he is a member of the Rajya Sabha but he must have gone too far finally.' Back issues of the *Express* were scanned to try to figure out which cartoon must have been considered unforgivably offensive by Somebody. A cartoonist for a widely circulated national daily is not an ideal target for MISA but at that time so many unlikely things had already happened that the possibility could not be ruled out. Later it was discovered that Abu had been watching birds (!) at Chilka Lake all that time.

A selection of Abu's cartoons and about half-a-dozen 'middles', the bulk of them dating from the Emergency period, have recently been brought out in a little booklet

entitled *The Games of Emergency*. The 'middles' are as delightful as ever but (and the reviewer hates to say this, being a devoted Abu fan) taking Sri Lambu and Sri Motu out of their natural habitat on the front page and crowding them up in a book takes the life right out of them. The best item in the collection is Abu's hilarious parody of any one of our typical politician's typical speeches entitled 'Caucus-Pocus'. A paragraph

'The eradication of literacy remains a matter of urgent priority. The disparity between the privileged literate few and the illiterate masses needs to be eliminated and the bridge must be gulfed. We should remember that seventy per cent of the people live in the illiterate areas and our youth who live in literacy should be encouraged to save the villages. We must at the same time stop our doctors and scientists from eradicating to foreign countries.'

As this little booklet shows, our fears for Abu back in '76 were reasonably justified; there is enough evidence here to get him convicted of first-degree irreverence even now.

This review has treated only a handful of the books that have appeared on the Emergency but all the material this reviewer has seen so far, whether included here or not, has focussed either on the national scene or on Delhi. Investigations of the State-level functioning of the Emergency are wholly missing. One would particularly like to know what really happened in the southern States. Why did voters there choose to remain loyal to Congress? Did the Centre neglect to impose the full rigours of the Emergency on the South or were political leaders there better able to protect their constituencies? What happened in Bengal and Gujarat? The effects of the Emergency in rural areas all over the country has not been studied. Writers have barely scratched the surface; we have only a fragment of the Emergency's history and very few observations on if or how the experience has changed India's voters and political processes.

The lessons

C G K REDDY

I was in Davao, the principal city in the southern island of Mindanao, Philippines, to attend a seminar, late September, 72. There were other participants from various countries of Asia who were visiting the Philippines for the first time. They were greatly impressed by the freedom that was enjoyed and exercised by the press, the politician, the intellectual and whoever had an opinion to express.

The newspapers, the columnists, the TV and radio were free with their criticism of any and everyone, right up to President Marcos himself. Many of those who had come to the symposium thought there was free licence which the media appeared to enjoy without any restraint or sense of responsibility.

The Philippine press came in for particular criticism on this account. But all of us were agreed that it was far more desirable to have a free press, even if some of the newspapers exercised their freedom irresponsibly, than to suffer any kind of restraint on this freedom.

Those who were strangers to the Philippines were impressed by the red-carpet treatment we were receiving. The Governor of the province, the Military Commander, the Mayor of the city, all vied with each other to fete and feast us. They were even more impressed when, on reaching Manila, they saw the power and influence the press wielded over President Marcos. All this was to me, an old hand of the Philippines, only confirmation of

the freedom that the Filipinos enjoyed. At that point of time, the press in the Philippines enjoyed greater freedom than any enjoyed by any other country in the Third World, India not excluded.

But, I was back in the Philippines less than a month after I had seen for the last time the fullness of the freedom that the press had enjoyed, and I had so greatly admired. When I landed in Manila in late October, all freedoms lay extinguished. I was called to join a delegation of prominent newspapermen from all over Asia to intercede with President Marcos on behalf of scores of newspaper publishers, editors, columnists, politicians and intellectuals who had been arrested and detained by the President. Among them was the publisher of the most influential and reputed *Manila Times* group, Joachim Roces, The Vice-President of the Republic, Lopez, himself was in jail, and so was the leader of the opposition in the senate, Aquino. Marcos spared no one in his midnight swoop, whatever his position, influence or character. Among several hundreds who were picked up in Manila alone were some who had not opposed Marcos, or were likely to. But Marcos and his military administration took no chances and were willing to err on the safe side, to ensure that not even the smallest potential pocket of resistance was left free to operate.

It took me and my colleagues several visits and over three months to secure the release of Joachim Roces who was also the Chairman of the Press Foundation of Asia, and of a few other newspapermen. Many others continue to languish in jail along with several prominent men in the field of politics, the professions and the arts.

What Marcos did, and the fact that he got away with it without much resistance was a traumatic experience for me and others who had seen and breathed the freedom that the people of the Philippines had enjoyed. None of us could even have dreamt that a free society could be so completely and so effectively destroyed by one

stroke of a President by the simple device of declaring martial law. What shocked me even more was the complete absence of effective resistance in spite of hopes, nurtured by Filipino friends, who assured me that their people would not take all that had happened to them, lying down. According to them, the situation would not last.

After almost all the newspapers, except those published by the friends and relatives of the President, had been closed down with no hope of their being ever permitted to resume publication, or of being allowed even a little of the freedom that they had enjoyed and exercised before martial law, I participated in the game which 'intellectuals' indulge in on such occasions. Of analysing and finding the answers to the question: 'How did it happen to the Philippines?' Assisted by intellectual Filipino friends, I was persuaded to believe that it was the surprise with which Marcos had struck, that had immobilised the the opposition, which had, until the other day demonstrated its ability to force the President from a course of action they did not approve of.

When nothing happened, and hope itself disappeared after a couple of months, I gave myself what I then thought was the answer. The Philippines was ruled by less than a hundred families who had established a firm grip over politics, the administration, finance, industry, commerce, the media and even the arts and culture. What had been happening in the political field earlier, was a kind of shadow-boxing, more for public consumption and less of a fight over principles, ideology, or the interest of the country and the people. What appeared to the observer as a living and ever aware democratic process, was really a fight for the Palace among the ruling families who were divided into political parties. The people were not even on the fringe of the drama that was played for their satisfaction.

In finding this answer to the situation in the Philippines, I felt satisfied and was arrogant while telling my Filipino friends that what

had happened to their country could never happen to India. I believed in this despite fears and disappointments that I had experienced during my political life and newspaper career. I am sure that this view was shared not only by fatuous and facile journalists, but also by serious students. A long drawn-out movement for independence, with those who took part in it still alive and active, a relatively free press, a vigilant and live parliament and what appeared to be an organised opposition willing, and demonstrating its ability to fight the government, were all guarantees, we were convinced, against the fate of the Philippines overtaking us here.

There were a few, woefully few, who saw in the events and developments of recent years, dictatorial proclivities. The most prominent and the earliest to see signs of danger was Dr Rammanohar Lohia. But, leaders of public opinion and politicians laughed at his fears, and put them down as flowing from what they were convinced was his unreasonable hostility to the Nehru family. After his death, there was no one left to administer the warning and try and build the safeguards. The Patel Chowk incident in 1970, when a peaceful demonstration was beaten up brutally, and Madhu Limaye, Raj Narain and George Fernandes were hospitalised with serious injuries, opened the eyes a little.

However, we continued to be lulled by our exaggerated estimate of the strength and abilities of the opposition and people in general. It was not till Mrs Gandhi showed her hand during the JP movement when JP himself was the victim of the police baton, and the manner in which she handled the Railway strike in May 74, that fears began to be expressed. Even so, there was hardly anyone who foresaw a situation in which Mrs Gandhi would have the audacity and the ability to establish herself as the virtual dictator of the country. But that is precisely what happened on June 26, 1975.

What happened to the brave and determined opposition? Where were the freedom-loving newspapers?

What befell the intellectuals? How could opposition be so effectively destroyed, newspapers suppressed and the intellectuals frightened into submission? All without too much force, just by threats? The morning of June 26, '75 and the black days that followed, witnessed an exhibition of cowardice, lack of determination and a willingness to accept what was clearly a dictatorship, that was shameful to see, and difficult to believe. The people appeared to have been so thoroughly emasculated that they surrendered all their rights without a fight.

The emasculation of our people to the point of acceptance of flagrant injustices and of the inability to offer even feeble resistance to arbitrary authority can be read from the history of periods before and after independence. Before tracing the degeneration of the Indian character, it would be profitable to examine if a part answer can be found in the way culture, religion and philosophy have moulded the Indian mind.

Obedience, implicit obedience, has been extolled as a great virtue in the Orient. In India, the pressure to obey is irresistible. From birth till even after death, we are told that there is no greater virtue than obedience. We have been made to believe in the three great *bhaktis*, sometimes placed even higher than the worship of God himself. Very early is the child taught the divine nature of *Pitru Bhakti*. Devotion to parents can be best expressed by implicit obedience. Woe to the child who dares disobey parental edicts. It cannot even ask the why of an order. *Guru Bhakti* is as essential to attain *moksha*, and the teacher draws additional strength from the parent supporting him in his authoritarianism.

How many stories have we been told of the pure devotion of our heroes to their gurus? *Guru Bhakti* is so divine that even an *avatar* such as Rama had to practise it. Childhood and youth are spent in implicit obedience to one's parents and the teachers. Both conspire, involuntarily, perhaps, to destroy what little spirit there is in Indian youth. Be it the kind of education, the career or life-partner, an Indian youth can

ill afford to act against the wishes of the parent and teacher. By the time he is a full grown adult, he has forgotten to question, and has acquired the habit to obey. Rebels there have been, but they were few and have been subjected to so much torture, indignity and disability, that fewer have been the emulators.

The two Indian tyrants, the parent and the teacher, together instil and promote the third *bhakti*, *Raj bhakti*, which takes precedence over the two. As if by agreement, the third tyrant supports the other two. Originally, as devotion to the person of the King, it has survived as obedience and respect for the government. Whenever the government is dominated or idolised through a person, the *bhakti* gets translated into personal devotion. The ruler can do no wrong, and it is our duty to obey without question.

The Indian mind learns quite early the divine nature of obedience to authority, and is given no opportunity to unlearn or question this concept. Religion and hallowed tradition are pressed into service, and social pressures come into play to keep the Indian happy in servility. That is why perhaps India, which contributed so much to pure thought, has produced so few since the *Vedas*, who were capable of thinking. The Indian has become a stranger to the spirit of inquiry. Having been told that the path to heaven lies through worship of authority — parental, of the teacher, of the ruler — he goes through life as an obedient and unthinking being.

With this attitude deeply embedded in his psyche, he is an easy and willing prey to the tyrant. Authoritarianism flourishes, and the way towards dictatorship is easy. Even so, conscious and deliberate steps have been taken to profit by the favourable mental attitude and to reduce the Indian citizen to formal slavery by divesting him of the power and ability to resist authority.

For a short period we retrieved our manhood and were taught to rebel against evil and injustice. Gandhiji succeeded in instilling pride and the courage to resist. He taught us that authority which was

not just, must be resisted and overthrown. Coming from one who had acquired the authority of a religious leader, it was not difficult to get over our firmly embedded respect for authority. Whatever be one's view of Gandhiji's contribution to the awakening of the '20s, '30s and '40s, and his ultimate place in history, it cannot be gainsaid that he made a man out of the servile Indian. The retransformation of the Indian into a nibbling, scampering mouse during 30 years of independence, can be traced to the system that was inherited and refined and to the men and the women who took charge of our destiny and who, to our misfortune, enjoyed the trust and love of our people.

It is said that we got our independence too soon, and that the tired old men who were at the head of the struggle for independence were in a hurry to attain power. This is true, but only partly. The tired old men were also frightened at the prospect of the struggle for independence becoming a mass movement concerned not only with political independence from British rule, but with the rights of the people. There was real danger of the people acquiring the will to resist not only the British, but every kind of authoritarianism. If the movement had been allowed to take the natural course, there would have been no place for those who inherited political power. That is why the compromises including the one over Pakistan, and that was why the great hurry to get into the chair. The haste was so indecent that they dared even Gandhiji.

The clear portents that Nehru, Patel and the lesser ones so clearly saw were signified by two developments. The first was the INA, followed very soon by the RIN mutiny that was about to trigger revolts in the army and the air force. Nehru lost no time to wallow in the glory of the INA by donning his long discarded barrister robes to defend them. Immediately after however he proceeded to deny the INA men not merely the reward of heroes, but confirmed their discharge from the army. Never in history have patriots in the army who rose in revolt against a foreign oppressor been so

shabbily treated by the inheritors of the revolution.

This shameful action was by design and not, as is commonly believed, to uphold discipline in the armed forces. It was convenient for Nehru to listen to the advice of the army brass, who were also motivated by selfish interest, because that way he could get rid of people who had shown courage and were likely to resist the successor government. Sardar Patel's collusion with the then British rulers and his warning to the RIN mutineers to surrender had similar motivations. In the process, if the INA and RIN patriots were penalised, it was for the good cause of ensuring that the new government faced no trouble from spirited people. It also served as a warning that obedience was what the local rulers would insist on. The message was clear 'The fight is over, back to the barracks! Your new commander knows what is good for you!'

From the first day of independence, the call was for unquestioned support to the new government. It was given a patriotic flavour. The problems were many, integrity of the country was at stake, the enemy was at our doors, communalism was rearing its head, the stupendous task of progress and prosperity was facing us. All these required unity, discipline and hard work. Follow the leader who knows what is good for the country and you. In the name of patriotism, unquestioned obedience was asked for and insisted upon.

That being the philosophy, an administrative structure was needed that could enforce discipline and virtually take away the right to resist, even to protest. There was no need to design a suitable administrative system. It was there, designed by the colonial power precisely for the purpose. No attempt was made to reform the system, or the laws. The criminal procedure code, the police manual and the powers that the administrators and the police wielded were retained. Not merely retained—they were further strengthened. The District Magistrate/Collector had absolute power over

the life and liberty of the people in his jurisdiction. It was no accident that the Preventive Detention Act came into being within five years of independence and has since remained almost permanently in the statute book. The first amendment to the Constitution qualified and restricted freedom of speech.

Not only was the system which the rulers inherited most suited for the growth of authoritarianism, but the new ruling class was elitist, far removed from the masses. The inheritors were the English educated upper classes/castes. This perhaps could not be avoided, because the leadership of the Congress was in the hands of the middle and upper class caste aristocracy or professionals. Not a single leader of the masses had emerged in the thirty year movement for independence. This upper class elite, because of education and training, had been associated with the British rulers, and had imbibed their attitudes. It was now for the Brown Sahibs to carry what was till then the White Man's burden. And carry it they did, with almost the conviction that it was too heavy to bear, and it was their right to demand, and the patriotic duty of the people to extend, unqualified and unquestioned support.

Around the ruling group gathered concentric circles of their kind who belonged to the same class, same castes and, of course, with the same obsession and belief in the mission which they were destined to perform. It did not matter if some of them, most of them, were the collaborators of yesterday. That is why Girija Shankar Bajpai whom Nehru threatened to hang at the nearest lamp post before independence, became the country's first Secretary-General. That was also the reason for Shanmukam Chetty, Ramaswamy Mudaliar and others to be esconced in positions of power and influence. Talent was the demand of the day. It did not matter if the so-called talent was tainted, and its possessors were far removed from the people, their aspirations and their needs.

There was almost an incestuous growth of the new establishment. If

they were not all in Oxford or Cambridge, they attended the best schools and colleges in India. They belonged to the same clubs and attended the same parties. If caste barriers were broken, they were confined to this exclusive class. Eligible daughters and sons from the echelons of politics, the administrative service and big business married each other, and the elite was fast becoming one big family. Their interests coincided and they tied themselves into a close knit group isolating themselves from the people. They were more comfortable in London or New York, or in the company of the westerner than with their own in the countryside. Their food, clothes and general life-style were more the international, than Indian. They could hardly communicate in an Indian language. Their isolation and rootlessness were complete.

Like all the rootless and isolated people they developed contempt and fear of their own people. The remedy was to further isolate themselves and dispossess the masses of their rights. To maintain their life style, they had to dispossess them of material needs as well. This they did by loudly proclaimed egalitarian laws which actually further impoverished the under-privileged. In the name of economic growth, emphasis was on large-scale industry and monopolies which alone were supposed to have the talent and skills to establish and manage economic progress. In the process, the village and its poor were further impoverished.

In such a situation, revolutionary trends ought to have grown. Strangely, the revolution that many thought to be inevitable, never came about. For the simple reason that leaders of all parties including of the ultra Left were drawn from the same elite—the high castes and classes. Such opposition as there was to the ruling party and group was led by members of the same establishment. The result was aptly referred to by Lohia as shadow-boxing. The aim was a palace coup rather than a real people's movement. The opposition leader only thought himself better equipped than the ruler. He offered no fundamentally different policy or

programme. He was as afraid of the people as the ruling elite. Criticism of adult franchise was not infrequent — how it was a great blunder to have given the vote to the uneducated poor!

Centralism also became popular in these circumstances. Even before independence, everyone looked up to the centre for help, for guidance, for the solution of local problems. The Working Committee, the High Command, as it came to be known, was the supreme command. It selected the local satrap, disciplined the local rebel and asked for and secured implicit obedience. The pre-independence Congress Party, if anything, was even more undemocratic than after independence. The central leadership decided who was to be Congress President, Presidents of Pradesh Committees, Chief Ministers of States and anyone else of any importance. The price for rebellion was paid by Subhash Bose, Khare, Nariman, and revolt was squelched once and for all.

The traditional respect for authority was encouraged, so that no initiative or power was left to the base of the organisation. Everyone looked up to the centre, and to the figure that held sway. Nehru inherited all this, flourished and wallowed in it. He was the supreme leader who wielded unquestioned power to do practically whatever he wished. He became the dictator by consent.

Besides the validity of the cliché that absolute power corrupts absolutely, no human being can resist what he thinks is universal support and adulation. One man rule even by consent breeds nepotism, corruption and insulates the ruler from the people. Palace intrigues become the order of the day. Vigilance disappears, and there is a breakdown of all ethics. Sycophants and seekers of power, privilege and wealth come closer and they are willing to do whatever the ruler wants. Sycophancy pervades the civil service, the defence forces and even such spheres as the press, education, the arts and culture. Promotion is based on the person's usefulness to sustain the ruler in power, rather than merit, ability or understanding of the needs of the country. Slowly, the purpose

of administration, education, culture, *et al* is to strengthen and sustain the ruler. Policies and programmes are designed for the same purpose.

In these circumstances, it is not strange that despite the oft-heard complaint that the civil service was being politicalised, not one civilian resigned and made the reasons public. If General Thimmayya had stuck to his decision to resign in protest against Krishna Menon's political interference, the Defence Services would have been free from nepotism, and perhaps there may not have been the ignominy of a crushing defeat by China. That was too much to expect of Thimmayya when bigger people than him went along without protest, and eased their consciences by telling themselves that unquestioned support to the leader was essential. Indira Gandhi's call for the strengthening of the centre and herself was an extension of the oft-repeated and accepted need.

Nehru apparently decided that it was not enough to enjoy the near unanimous support and adulation. It was necessary to neutralise all potential dissent. First of all, he addressed himself to latent opposition to him within the Congress. This was easily done. With his reputation as a socialist and democrat, and the many paper resolutions that were adopted at his instance by the Party and the Government, the latent opposition was unable to question his authority.

The opposition within the Congress had no leader of any standing. The minor ones had their reputations sullied, even before they could organise resistance to Nehru's authoritarianism. In this conspiracy to dispose of anyone who dared criticise Nehru or his policies, the press and public opinion served as handmaidens. The manipulations within the Congress Party that shot down any potential rival were always done by proxy. No one could point a finger at Nehru, and he remained almost till the end, an upright, decent democrat. But the fact that no one was allowed to grow to any significant stature, giving rise to the constant fearful question: 'After Nehru, who?', is evidence enough of

how he built himself as the unquestioned leader.

It was not enough to destroy opposition within the party. Opposition outside the party had also to be neutralised. This was not too difficult for the consummate politician that Nehru was. In his efforts to destroy the credibility of the opposition and its effectiveness, he received support from the opposition leaders themselves. They seemed to be ever on the defensive, frightened of the Nehru image which they themselves had helped build up, and seemed anxious to sustain. They appeared desperately keen to earn a good, kind word from him. This anxiety to please Nehru made him the arbiter of the fortunes of the opposition parties and their leaders. Most of them had been in the Congress and had therefore brought with them their admiration and personal regard for the leader. They remained enamoured by him, so much so that he could control their activities and even their thinking by a smile or a frown.

Nehru was a master in the art of divide and rule. The split personality in the opposition parties was largely due to the personal relationships he maintained with the milder and pliable leadership of these parties. This personal relationship and regard were imported by the leadership into the thinking and activities of the parties they led.

I was a victim of this state of affairs in 1952. Acharya Narendra Dev was the leader of the Socialist Party in Parliament, and I was the party's spokesman on foreign affairs. During a debate on foreign affairs, I was highly critical of Nehru's foreign policy in accordance with the Socialist Party's declared resolutions. In reply, Nehru had the indecency and audacity to say that he was not prepared to have me represent the views of my party, and that both JP and Narendra Dev, my leaders, fully endorsed his policy. It was distressing to find that my party leadership was unwilling to support me in this controversy. The fact that Narendra Dev was the house guest of Nehru in Delhi was not the only reason. The Socialist

Party leadership was unwilling to expose itself to a direct attack by Nehru.

The attitude of the Communist Party was not substantially different. It was caught up in the compulsions of Soviet foreign policy, unwilling to launch a direct attack on Nehru's government even on domestic policy. As for foreign policy, Lohia described the relationship very pithily: Nehru loves the communists everywhere except in India, and the communists loved Nehru everywhere other than in India!

To quote Lohia again, the opposition was indulging in shadow-boxing. It failed to analyse in depth the situation in the country, and was unable to suggest basically different and apt solutions to the problems. Whether in the manifestoes, resolutions or speeches, the basic approach was the same. The difference between the ruling party and the opposition was like that between tweedledum and tweedledee. The opposition appeared to be as afraid of the people as Nehru and company were. They made no effort to organise the people to participate in the mainstream of the political life of the country. They were as keen to indulge in, and as comfortable with, elitist politics as those who had inherited power after independence.

Besides, the leadership of all opposition parties was almost entirely drawn from the high castes and privileged classes. At the instance of Dr Lohia, I drew up a list of the members of the central committees of the major political parties in 1953, together with the caste of each member and his profession. I do not recall the exact percentage, but it was found that nearly ninety per cent of the central political leadership belonged to the high castes; more than half of them being Brahmin. Nearly all of them were educated in English, and an overwhelmingly large number of them were more fluent in the foreign tongue than in their own. With that kind of background, education and training, their thinking, approach and activity were all elitist and therefore largely irrelevant to the conditions in the country. They

could not compete with the ruling party in attracting support from the same elite which had a lot to gain from associating itself with the Congress Politics, as a consequence, remained the exclusive game of the elite. The large mass of the people remained outside, unwanted, uncared for and, therefore, uninterested.

The divide and rule policy was so sedulously followed that disputes remained unsolved, and divisive forces gained ground. Rivalries among party groups, inter-State disputes — rivalries, disputes and antagonisms of every kind remained unresolved. All the contestants appealed and looked up to the great leader. The leader, as the sole arbitrator kept the disputes unresolved, so that the groups remained at war, and he himself safe and powerful.

Religious and caste rivalries got accentuated. Secularism meant keeping the minorities ever afraid of the major community and looking to the national leader for protection. This protection was given in exchange for support to his party and himself. It was no accident that the former Muslim League in the Northern States merged with the Congress. In every election, the communal bogey was trotted out and the Muslim votes were secured in exchange for 'protection'. In this process, the Muslims remained outside the mainstream. For the sake of propaganda, they got representation in the cabinet, the judiciary, the army or the services. That was the measure of secularism.

Scheduled Tribes and castes and backward classes were dealt with likewise. Some of their representatives were given positions of prestige and power. But the rest remained where they had been for thousands of years suffering from social and economic disabilities, and unassimilated. The so-called leaders of these communities joined the elite, and this was trotted out as proof of the progress of these downtrodden masses. Harijan uplift, which was a movement during Gandhiji's day was institutionalised, drawing support from the Constitution and statutes, instead of from social acceptance.

Politics and the much trumpeted economic and social reforms were the preserve of the elite. The common man was deliberately and effectively kept out of these preserves. He became important only during elections, when the election machine delivered his vote.

This election machine was kept well oiled and fuelled to spring into action when needed. It functioned well on the money of the rich and the votes of the poor. The influence of the privileged, right down to the village level, was nurtured through schemes that were meant to decentralise and delegate genuine power to the people. Ostensibly, the Panchayats, community development schemes and the cooperatives were meant to diffuse political and economic power and encourage the people to determine and manage their destiny. In the event, all of them helped to strengthen the already privileged and put more money into their hands. All that the Panchayat system, the C.D. schemes and the co-operatives did was to strengthen the already existing power-structure. Not for fun or even prestige were elections to the Panchayats fought bitterly. Membership meant control of funds that were being pumped in. The C.D. movement likewise gave opportunities to the local strong man to enrich and entrench himself. It is now widely accepted that the co-operative movement subsidised the rich and nurtured corruption.

Further, all these schemes put into the hands of the local leaders power over the distribution of scarce resources and services. These movements which were meant to be non-political were highly and unashamedly politicalised. The Congress Party which had long ceased to be a movement could not claim to be even an organisation. It developed into an effective and colossal election machine with its functionaries occupying seats of power and influence in the Panchayats, co-operatives and such like. They could be relied upon to deliver the votes when and where wanted. The dispossessed, the oppressed and the poor were made so dependent on the

local bosses, that they voted the way they wanted

It has been noted before that the opposition parties tried to emulate the Congress in these games, but failed utterly for the simple reason that they had nothing to share. Instead of organising movements of the common people so that they may fight for their rightful place in the national mainstream, the opposition tried to get into partnership with the ruling party and, as minor partners, could only get a minor share of the power. With the lone exception of Lohia, opposition leaders went so far as to advance theories to justify their collaboration with the ruling party. The most prominent and amusing of them all was *The Political Compulsions of a Backward Economy* authored by Asoka Mehta in the late '50s

As for Lohia, his uncompromising criticism of the Congress and Nehru were all put down as his congenital hostility to the Nehru family. His concepts such as the Land Army, Food Army, the significance of language and caste in our society, were laughed at, attempted to be copied, and finally caricatured. Unfortunately, there was no other opposition leader who saw so clearly through the game of the Congress Party and its leader

With the opposition lacking in perception, courage and will, vigilance, which alone could have prevented concentration of power in the hands of one man, was eroded. The press, which should have performed the role of a watch dog, failed utterly. Newspapers became increasingly big business and, therefore, beholden to the government. Except for faint noises made immediately after the China War, the press saw nothing fundamentally wrong in the democratic process. Nehru, the holy cow, was adored by the press until the last

The role of the intellectuals during the thirty years of independence was even more shameful. Sycophancy and servility became a way of life for them. Eminence came to be measured in terms of the positions they held or the titles — Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan or even Padma Shri — they secured. State

favour could be bought only by singing the praise of the party in power. The economist, the scientist, even the artist curried favour by singing the refrain pleasing to the ear of the ruler. In their quest for recognition and reward, the intellectuals failed to see the slow erosion of liberty, if they did, they refused to acknowledge it.

With the people dispossessed of political and economic power, the opposition indulging in shadow-boxing, the press reduced to willing servility and the intellectual transformed into a sycophant, the ground was clear for the emergence of dictatorship. And dictatorship it was under Nehru, although there was no need for him to do away with the formal freedoms as his daughter did. As a towering personality at the helm enjoying the support and adulation of the people, Nehru was never under compulsion to deny the formal fundamental freedoms. With the opposition the press and liberal opinion unwilling to express the freedoms which they were supposed to enjoy, there was no compulsion to do what his daughter was forced to do a decade after his death. It is debatable if he would have taken the path his daughter took, had he lived long enough for the opposition that was gathering against him to assume a real threat to his position.

The interregnum between the two Nehrus is generally thought to be a colourless period. From the point of view of the strengthening of the Prime Minister's office and power, however, it was very significant. Lal Bahadur was a shrewd politician who realised that he could never command the charisma Nehru enjoyed. He therefore set about consciously to make the PM's office a powerful and prestigious institution. In Nehru's time, the PM had only an office. It was Lal Bahadur who created the Prime Minister's secretariat, that acquired the prestige and power of a supra government under Mrs Gandhi. Not merely did it become the overseer of all ministries, it formally took over almost all the sensitive organs of government. Under Mrs Gandhi, her secretariat expanded to become as large

as any ministry. Formal changes were not made to give her secretariat all the power it wielded. But that was not necessary when it became the *de facto* government.

It was known that the PM's secretariat had gradually acquired all supervisory and veto powers. And, yet, not a protest of any consequence was made. The press was silent about this development. What was surprising was that Parliament should also have thought the development to be not significant. Members of the cabinet seemed to have been so keen on keeping their jobs that they were willing to take orders from a minor official of the PM's secretariat without protest. Here was evidence of total lack of perception and even self-respect in high places. The present Prime Minister cannot escape the responsibility for lack of vigilance. When he was Deputy PM and Finance Minister, he acquiesced in the expansion of an office that turned out to be the planning and command centre for the growing arbitrariness and authoritarianism that inexorably led to the Emergency.

It was through her Secretariat that Mrs Gandhi manipulated personalities, policies and decisions. All appointments were screened with a view to placing loyal people in strategic and sensitive posts. Policies were planned by her staff. Those that were proposed by ministries were whetted by her men. Her office took over the economic and security intelligence agencies. Even those that remained formally with the Home Ministry took orders from her men. The apparatus for authoritarian administration was being continuously honed and, yet, no one seems to have noticed or cared. The tragedy is that many thought that for a country such as ours authoritarianism was necessary. The situation was very favourable for the power seekers and sycophants. All that they had to do was to get hold of a Yashpal or a Dhawan.

As the machine was being built up, trial runs were organised. The

first major trial was at Patel Chowk in 1970, when peaceful demonstrators were severely beaten. Among the victims were several members of Parliament. There was a furore, but not fierce enough to slow down the process of violent suppression of dissent. The brutal suppression of the railway strike in 1974 was an unmistakable sign. Yet, the press and public saw in the incident only the unreasonable demands of the railwaymen. That the press and the intellectual could be so misled even in regard to the demands of the railwaymen, and that they just would not see the illegal brutality that was unleashed, was evidence of the docile and unthinking behaviour of the 'watch dogs' of democracy.

Government violence seen in all its nakedness during the railway strike was repeated in the suppression of the JP movement in Bihar. JP himself was assaulted and the *Searchlight* was burnt. Qualified regret for the assault was extracted from an unwilling Home Minister. The then Information Minister, Gujral, told a delegation of the Newspaper Society that the *Searchlight* and all such newspapers which supported JP's 'undemocratic' movement deserved such treatment. The press took this open confession and threat without protest or exposure.

When such clear portents drew nothing more than feeble protests, Mrs Gandhi and her coterie were naturally emboldened to perfect and ready the power structure and plans for the formal take over of absolute power. It is now clear that long before the Allahabad judgement, plans were being made to liquidate all opposition and legalise authoritarianism.

It is widely believed that Mrs Gandhi was very unsure and fearful of the consequences of her actions in the small hours of June 26, 75. It is doubtful if she was really concerned. Certainly she had no reasons to be. Her Government's arbitrary and atrocious acts earlier had not generated serious resistance. Even protests were very feeble. Those who could have and should have organised protest and resistance

were either imperceptive, indifferent, cowardly, or had become servile sycophants. Where then was the danger, the risk? From the people?

Evidence to the contrary, it was expected that the people would rise in revolt against the Emergency, just as they did in 1942. For over twenty long years before 1942, the people had been organised into a movement. There was a commitment and they were physically and emotionally a part of the movement. Even with the leadership clamped in jail, the people rose in revolt and exhibited commendable daring, initiative and sacrifice. But why should the people have revolted in 1975? What did they lose with the Emergency? What was their place in the conflict between Mrs Gandhi and her opponents? Almost by conspiracy they had been deprived both by Mrs Gandhi and the opposition of their economic and political rights. Democracy for them meant nothing, certainly they had no say in the affairs of the country, not even in the affairs of their villages. Fundamental rights meant nothing to them. They were not allowed to exercise them. Why then should they have been agitated by the declaration of the Emergency, the abrogation of fundamental rights and the arbitrary arrests?

It is time the elite of the country who have held monopoly and continue to hold it over the affairs of the nation, realised that it is they and they alone who suffered under the dictatorship in the initial months. How democratic rights have been denied to the majority of our people has already been discussed. Few realise that the risk of arbitrary arrest is faced by the common people in normal times. Sections 109 and 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code empower the lowest police officer to arrest and detain anyone who in his opinion is likely to endanger public order. A very large proportion of those in jail are confined under these sections. Even a larger number of the jail population are under trial, some of them, detained for months, years. These are the legal detentions. Thousands are arrested every day all over the country illegally and kept in police stations.

We are disturbed by the treatment that was meted out to political prisoners during the Emergency. Have those political prisoners among whom is the Home Minister, given a thought after their release, to the inhuman treatment that is meted out to those who are alleged to have committed a crime and are under trial? We are incensed, quite rightly, by the death due to torture of Rajan, and by the torture of Snehalata Reddy and Lawrence Fernandes. These examples should draw our attention to the lot of those who are arrested every day and are subjected as a matter of course to third degree methods. But somehow only the intellectual, the political worker or a member of the elite appears to us to be entitled to dignity or have the sensitivity to pain of torture. This selfishness and callousness continue to maintain the chasm between the large masses of people and the privileged of our country. And so long as this chasm exists, democracy has no meaning nor will it be safe from another onslaught from a potential dictator.

The democratic process will remain an abstract, irrelevant concept unless the State apparatus, the laws and the administrative system are all amended to ensure power to the people. We have seen how easily the elite can be corrupted and how selfish and cowardly they can be. We have also experienced the silent determination and courage of the unlettered and the unenlightened (for whom the elite have had contempt) once their dignity and rights are affected. It was precisely those who have been ignored and deprived, who saved democracy for the country. They are people who have to be strengthened and kept committed to the democratic process. The role of the intellectual and the politician is to learn from recent history and help in planning and maintaining a system and structure that can put power into the hands of the people and withstand pressure from the ambitious and the power-hungry. They must also remember that the loss of freedom starts from the little insignificant erosions and that injustice and evil have small beginnings.

The election

RAJ THAPAR

THE rumour began to float in early January—elections may be held. This simple thought was enough to blow the mind. Incredulous, unbelieving, searching out for the proverbial bone in the *kabab*, people went about cautiously feeling their way through the maze of questions that sprung up.

Why elections, how, what happened? Had Sanjay's hold decreased or increased, or had her democratic instincts suddenly burst through after having gone to sleep for two years? Or had she sensed the silent resentment at the Gauhati Congress session — and this hurried election might be one way of infusing support for the boy within the party? After all, the question of losing didn't arise, so why not pack the party with Youth Congress candidates and demonstrate the continuity of India's democratic process in one instant package. The opposition was not a factor to contend with; it had revealed no evidence of unity, activity, purpose.

Whatever the situation, it was baffling. We had been so far removed from public opinion of any kind or hue, that an initial feeling of helplessness quickly pervaded the scene. We had also been mesmerised by Indira Gandhi's success. Surely, her intelligence reports must have worked out the prospects for, one thing was certain — she would never risk her Prime Ministership for an election. What chance had we against the spreading government net with its immense power to rig, to mobilise those thousands of trucks that we had occasion to witness in the preceding year, to threaten and coerce our defenceless people. Perhaps the people wanted her back! So, should one even cooperate with such an election?

Certainly, in Delhi's middle class circles, the passing-the-theory discussion went on endlessly — still in the hushed tones of the Emergency. For, although elections were formally declared in January, and censorship lifted, caution had become a habit and no one knew what was coming. She would certainly be returned. A reduced majority might even bring her to her senses. That was all one could hope for in the early days. But, what if they arrested everyone afterwards like the hundred blooming flowers 'So watch your step and your speech just in case..'

No one had a clue, no one had confidence in anything and the press didn't show itself to be any the freer after the first shackles had been removed. The people at large were tight-lipped — wary, after many centuries of revealing their hand. It was then that I spoke to some villagers from Haryana.

'What are you going to do? Where will your vote go?', I asked. 'Oh, to the *sarkar*, where else', was the reply. 'You like the *sarkar*', I said quietly, wanting to appear as objective as possible. 'Like is the wrong word. You don't know what we have been going through — and you in the towns won't ever know. But, in India the *sarkar* has never been broken — and it never will be — and if we vote the other way now they most probably cut the little electricity we get at night'. 'But it is a secret vote', I said hesitatingly. 'Secret for you but not for us. They will know at once who voted for whom', was the cynical reply.

I said nothing more, confirmed in my doom scenario — an extension of the eighteen month horror on a

more permanent basis. There seemed no escape. The hurriedly gathered, motley Janata against the monolithic ruling party. Cracks in the Congress seemed as remote as the stars — till they shot through the scene on the morning of February 2.

A telephone call at 8 A.M. wanting some assistance in informing the papers of an emergency press conference at Jagjivan Ram's residence. 'What's happened' I asked. 'What we wanted' was the reply. I was reluctant to believe what this might mean. Could it be true? At eleven that day the Congress For Democracy was formed with Babuji finally having taken the plunge to break away — and Bahuguna with him.

P sychologically, this one act was to have the most remarkable impact on the mood of a people. Optimism surfaced immediately, the defeat had already begun. In fact, driving through the streets of Delhi that day was a strange experience. The little vendor handling the mid-day sheet carrying the news was shouting away 'Dub gae, dub gae, dub gae' (she's drowned, drowned, drowned), a sentiment which could never had been conceived of twenty four hours earlier.

Voices were suddenly louder, they could be heard. People wanted to be together with other people. Everyone was talking and laughing at once, not quite knowing why. Instinctively I felt that something had been blown away by Babuji's action — but against that was the overwhelming weight of government, of MISA, of fear, of numbers of people fed by a constant drone of AIR fairy tales

The sixth of February was to be the first test — the election meeting organised by the opposition. Government stopped the buses miles away from the venue and one was fearful that people just would not turn up. I didn't go myself, exhausted with the sheer weight of events, unable to face a small straggly crowd scattered on the sprawling Ram Lila ground. All this squeamishness arose from abysmal ignorance. We, the elite, knew nothing, nothing despite the unending theories we had spun

obviously for our own benefit as we were to discover later

But, the people walked, all kinds, all ages, filling the maidan with 500,000 bodies. Their presence itself was a protest. They listened with deep intent, with seriousness, anxious to hold on to every word that fell from JP's lips.

This is what I heard from our young who were politicised for the first time by the Emergency. They had no previous experience of the vast political Indian crowd, this so-called shuffling, inefficient, unlettered mass. Somehow, listening to the description I was transported back to 1942 and the mammoth meetings on the Chowpatty sands. It appeared to have the same kind of feel even though the political leadership was a varied collection under JP's decentralised umbrella called the Janata Party which was yet to be formally constituted

At a small informal meeting one night before Jagjivan Ram's revolt, the view was expressed by JP that 5000 volunteers would be needed for each Lok Sabha constituency. The mind boggled at the thought. Where would this dedicated breed spring from. How would it be organised, what about the posters, money, checking the rolls, jeeps for the rural areas — a crowding in of bewildering question marks. We were still blissfully unaware of the stampede which was to follow.

On the 8th or 9th of February, I went again to Haryana but this time avoided any political chat not wanting to be disillusioned, particularly as one was still savouring the events of the last week. 'Why aren't you talking today?' said a local mason. 'Where will she go now — to Italy?' 'Who on earth are you talking about?' I asked, 'Our Prime Minister', he answered. When I asked him what had happened to change his mind within a matter of weeks, he said, 'Ah, Babuji has split the *sarkar* and now the job is ours. Take out your pencil and paper and write down what is going to happen. Not one seat will the government get in Haryana I repeat, not one'.

Others gathered. I tried to fight their optimism with my own

doubts, presenting to them the omnipresence of this monolithic State, which surely could do anything to thwart an opposition. 'No, no' they said. 'With us sitting here, not a chance of rigging'.

When I questioned them about the possible candidate and the Janata Party, the same mason said, 'Look. We know two things. No one has looked at us these last thirty years and no one is going to in the future — but only in the Emergency did anyone dare catch us by the arm and forcibly do violence to our bodies. And now, Babuji has shown us the way. We will break the *sarkar* for the first time in our history'. It was a verbal triumph which remained in my ears until the day of the result.

Meanwhile, Delhi swung into action. The opposition leaders had merely to appear for crowds to collect. Congress workers at the base were very despondent. 'What can we do', one said. 'There's not a chance unless a very special candidate stands from here'. 'Who, for instance', I asked. 'Well, the local Congress office is putting out the story that Gujral will be called back from Moscow. That would certainly help', he said. I didn't want to frustrate his hopes. How I remembered the 1971 election, the excitement amongst the people, followed by the hush when the candidate's name for the New Delhi constituency had been announced. Mukul Banerji! This very organiser had said to me, 'Bring her to the meeting but please ask her to keep her mouth shut'. She soon came to be known as the *guni* during the campaign. If Gujral didn't make it then, he certainly wouldn't make it now.

The issue of the election was seemingly simple — the Emergency had to be thrown out of our body politic. But the other implications were complex and disturbing, particularly to those who felt the burden of their education and profession — even though it was just one's own pompous idea of oneself. Sadly, the Emergency had resurrected many from political death. They were now standing as candidates and the

idea of voting them in and fighting them later was mortifying. There was also the question of voting for someone whose ideological convictions were so many miles away that one would have to make constant leaps to cover the distance. Besides, the leadership was poised precariously at a point in age and health which was to give us many anxious moments, particularly in JP's case.

News of the Janata Party office was conflicting. Some talked about chaos and confusion, others of bustling activity and purpose. All manner of youngsters started sporting little ragged Janata flags, campaigning from house to house. News from the States began to trickle through. It was tentative and faltering. The only definite statement we got was from erstwhile Congress leader Bahuguna who did not give the ruling party more than 220 seats — this was in February itself.

This was a difficult figure to believe — it seemed to have no relationship to the cheering masses and the absolute leader we had been used to. It also shattered the myths of money, organisation, relevant candidates, the 'illiterate' voter pummelled for months by a radio singing the glories of the leader, myths which we had confused with scientific analysis as we were to learn later. Money came, perhaps not in suitcases full of notes but sufficient to see the minimum through. After all, if our people had learnt the hard lesson of survival through the centuries, so had our businessmen, insuring the future from all sides.

One kept wondering whether all this was just wishful thinking, but as Delhi's election meetings began to roll along, the confirmation became evident. Indira Gandhi's Boat Club meeting was a sharp indication. The lawns were generously covered, mainly with government servants from the secretariats around. It was a sunning, chatting crowd. She arrived and Shashi Bhushan, the prospective candidate, whose rather 'filmy' face had stared at us through the posters pasted along the constituency walls, took the mike. The audience was inattentive, their conversations con-

tinuing in lower key. Then after a while, he shouted, 'Bolo, Indira Gandhi ki'. Silence. He repeated the cheer as it were, but to the same response. Bewildered and flustered, he thought the mike was out of order and he began pushing it around. 'Perhaps you can't hear me', he shouted — this led to laughter and a waving of hands to indicate how well they could hear. Indira then went on undeterred like a cross school mistress waving aside the punctuation marks from the audience which were close to heckling. Finally, she said, in the tone of 'now don't forget', 'Gow bachre ko vote dena' referring to the unfortunate Congress symbol. 'No... No...', was the answer given by clasped hands waving above a thousand heads. It was a defiant gesture which might cost them their jobs in case she returned.

Infected by the general mood, I ambled along to the opposition's afternoon meeting at the same point. People poured in from all sides until there were heads as far as the eye could see, right from Vijay Chowk to India Gate, all sitting on the ground. The size of the crowd was claustrophobic and a bit frightening — the slightest disorganisation could lead to a stampede. The rostrum seemed in some sort of marginal panic until it was announced that the NDMC had withdrawn the electricity for the mikes and alternate arrangements had to be made hurriedly. The meeting opened with a song — *Ek Kahani* relating what Indira and her sons had done to the country.

*Aao logo, suno kahani, baat nahin
hai bahut purani,
kissi desh mein ek thi rani, bahut
chattur aur bahut sayani,
uske the do raj dulare, bigar gaye
the laad ke mare,
— — — — —
ek shehzada, ek maharani, dono
karte the manm ani
— — — — —
subke mookh pur jakra tala, jo
bhi bola jail mein dala,
lathi, goli, censor, mi-a, is chakki
mein sab ko peesa,' this last line
being heard frequently in the streets
as people moved in groups from
area to area.*

The speeches of Vajpayee and Vijayalakshmi Pandit were restrained, soothing the passions rather than inflaming them, holding the mass audience in pin drop silence, with a discussion on what democracy meant, what the constitution meant and what the Emergency had meant. Then suddenly a murmur rolled through the silence as if from far away, growing in intensity till the words were clear 'Babuji'. Yes, Jagjivan Ram was coming and all eyes were straining for a glimpse but that was an impossibility from where we were sitting. The murmur then broke into cheering cries and Babuji's form ascended the rostrum. He had to swivel around to acknowledge the greetings. This certainly was a case of instant charisma — would have been unbelievable a month ago.

I came back deeply moved and wondering whether this was a localised phenomenon or a sampling of the whole. News reports the following day had unfailingly missed out the important bits like Vajpayee saying, 'You must show them that you can bring in socialism the peaceful way just as you are throwing out authoritarianism the peaceful way'.

Some young friends had disappeared into the depths of Bihar with tape recorders and their findings were startling. 'Who are your voting for?' 'The Janata'. 'Who did you vote for the last time?' 'The Congress'. 'Why this change?' 'They have put locks on our mouths and are doing some terrible things'. 'But how do you get this news?' 'Have you never heard of the BBC?' So this was the communications revolution. The transistor which we thought was tuned in to the praises of mother and son was actually being used for picking up news from elsewhere. The U.P. slogans were around the kowtowing Chief Minister 'na nar, na naari, Narayan Dutt Tiwari'. The remaining stanzas can't be given here — they might come under some obscenity law.

Responsible friends from Rajasthan said the voting would go half and half while a young peasant we knew who visited us

in Delhi disagreed. He thought the Janata would win even where there were no Janata organisers at all. 'Why?' I asked 'Can you imagine what the feeling of people is where the men have been wearing *ghagras* for two months to avoid vasectomy'.

It was clear that the Janata did not represent anything except a total rejection of the emergency. And confidence was created by JP's presence towering above the seething discontent. The individual candidates were unimportant. Would this be translated into the ballot box? It was difficult to sift the newspaper reports because editors were still fearful of predicting on the basis of what their men in the field were saying. Students returning from Amethi were clear that if the son was returned there would be bloodshed, so great was the feeling against him even in villages out in the wilds unconnected by any road. His election meetings were in shambles despite all the elaborate government organisation at his command. There was ambivalence over her own meetings in Rae Bareilly — but this was too difficult to assimilate — the idea that she could be defeated was inconceivable and I just dismissed the thought almost as if it were a prohibited item.

News from the South drew a blank. Someone attending a seminar in Tirupati found the feeling as intense there as anywhere else. He was shown a foundation stone laid by the son in the campus far away from the actual building. 'We did this so that we could remove it easily later on', was the explanation offered. But the result showed otherwise. Congress was solidly returned. Did the South not believe the story of oppression from the North? Or had it not experienced the horrors. It surely couldn't be insensitive to them — or could it?

Polling day came. The booths revealed very little. People walked to the Congress booth and collected their slips — and then cast their vote the other way. That was the pattern. In the rural areas it was like everyone going off to the *mela*,

dressed in their colourful best, electoral list number in hand. The songs were infectious.

*Jhoot bole, Janata kate,
Kale Jagu se dariyo,
Main Italy chali jaoongi
Tum dekhte Rahiyo
Tum dekhte Rahiyo
Toon Italy chali jayegi,
Main warrant le ke aaoonga
Toon warrant le ke aayega,
Main hotel me ghus jaoongi
Toon hotel mein ghus jayegi
Main bulldozer le ke aaoonga
Toon bulldozer le ke aayega
Main maruti mein chhip jaoongi
Main Italy nahin jaoongi
Main Janata mein mil jaoongi...*

There were instances such as one in U.P. where they even congratulated the Congress candidate on certain victory. It was a game everyone was playing. 'Don't let on because there is no knowing what she might do if she knows she has lost. If she could subvert the Constitution, she won't stop at anything'. This fear was deeply embedded in the Indian psyche by now and the lesson of survival had been fully digested. 'Keep her guessing until the very end'.

A man from a village near Delhi came running to our office the day after polling. 'Out of 1800 votes, 1600 have been cast for the Janata and 200 for the Congress'. 'How can you be so sure?', I asked and then he explained the procedure to me. The villagers sat over two nights discussing the whole issue and then took the decision. What's more, they all trusted each other to stick by their choice. 'No question of rigging' he said. 'We know it all down to the last vote'.

This village system applied to the town as well. The sweepers met, the dhobis met, in council as it were, and made up their minds. I had been quite unaware of this elaborate decision making process at the base. We later got stories from Chandigarh for instance where people turned up in their hundreds, bedding rolls tucked under arm, ready to keep vigil on the ballot boxes round the clock. Shopkeepers arranged for meals, everyone dividing up responsibility. This really

was the main point of the 1977 elections. People organised themselves, they were concerned, active, fearless and decisive and a great base to build upon if anyone cared to. In Rajasthan, where the Janata had little organisation, the people virtually took over. They knew the mechanics. They had been through several general elections. Each one had his electoral list number. Volunteers watched the ballot box in every booth. Constant guard was maintained where the ballot boxes were gathered for the counting.

The 20th of March of course was the spectacular moment. Glued to millions of radios, a whole 'backward, poor, illiterate, until now cowed down' people heard the results trickle in through a reluctant AIR and they exceeded the wildest of expectations. With this a certain terror gripped us. How would she let it go without some attempt at keeping the power which was so rudely being seized. What would she do? Surround Delhi? Arrest people? For a few hours rumour took over completely, and panic in some circles. Then, finally, at 8 P.M., we got the news. Sanjay had lost, and she was trailing way behind. It was over, the power dissolved.

The boards had gone up in Delhi outside the newspaper offices and crowds assembled to watch the changing numbers, and one by one the main characters of the Emergency drama fell like nine pins in a bowling alley. Haryana, not one seat, U.P., Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra — and so it went on except for the South. Hoots of joy went up from the bystanders as each result moved towards its end. We roamed around in Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg that night in a kind of community rejoicing. 'Mummy, meri car gayee, Beta, meri sarkar gayee', was the refrain when her defeat was imminent. The man who wrote the final figures of her result on the boards was showered with coins — a few hundred rupees. As we finally drove away, a man tapped our car and said, 'We threw them both out, mother and son'. We certainly did.

Commissions of inquiry

V. R. LAKSHMINARAYANAN

NINETEEN hundred and seventy-seven, a water-shed for commissions of inquiries, if not for the explosion of commissions appointed this year, happens to be the Silver Jubilee of the Commissions of Inquiry Act. The Indian Act drew the inspiration from the English Tribunals of Enquiries (Evidence) Act, 1921 but in its final design lapsed into the proverbial Indian legalese and thereby hangs many a flaw.

Sir Carlton Kemp Allen defined the purpose of a commission as solely to 'investigate and report' and anything which follows upon the tribunal's findings is largely a matter for political action unless, of course, reasons emerge for a civil suit against, or criminal prosecutions of, individuals. Going back to parallel English legal history, one would notice that prior to 1921, allegations of misconduct of Ministers and other matters of public importance causing a crisis in public confidence investigated by tribunals after 1921, were being referred to Parliamentary Committees of Enquiries. The disadvantages were obvious and the conclusions were coloured by political acerbities corrosive of their impartiality and public credibility.

An inquiry of that nature in this country with political life riven by intra-party intrigues and factious inter-party polemics is unthinkable. During the colonial period, *ad hoc* executive or administrative fiat formed the basis for many inquiries. But in 1952 the Indian Act came into being to regulate such inquiries into matters of public importance with a view to clothe such commissions with an essential element of impartiality and

judicial approach. This was particularly necessary viewed in the flash-back of the English experience prior to 1921 springing from the Report of the Parliamentary Committee into the Marconi scandal.

That Committee investigated into certain rumours casting scandalous aspersions on some functionaries of the Liberal Government, cavilling at the propriety of some financial transactions. Predictably, the majority exonerated the government and the minority vote found them guilty. The voting pattern was on party lines, and partisan politics decided the issue.

The history of inquiries over the last 25 years shows that, from time to time, cases arise concerning rumoured instances of lapses in accepted standards of public administration and other matters causing public concern which cannot be dealt with by ordinary judicial processes and which compel investigation in order to allay public anxiety. These cases vary in importance, urgency and complexity and may relate to matters of local or national concern.

Very often, these inquiries are conducted in an atmosphere of highly charged political animosity and, all the more reason, the findings should not lead to loss of credibility, and cynicism. In India, most of these inquiries have rightly been entrusted to serving or retired judges of the High Court or the Supreme Court to provide some measure of judicial impartiality and popular acceptability.

The Royal Commission on Tribunals of Inquiries in 1966 noted that over a period of nearly 50 years, 15

inquiries had been held under the provisions of the English Act of 1921. Five alone were of special significance in the sense that they related to the budget leak of 1936, the Lynskey Tribunal of 1948 inquiring into corrupt conduct on the part of a Minister, the Bank Rates Tribunal, the Vassall Tribunal and Profumo enquiry. Contrast that with the Indian experience! This year alone, we have five major Commissions of Inquiry appointed by the Central Government — including the Shah Commission — to inquire into and report upon grave allegations of misconduct, abuse of official position and serious departures from standards of public conduct by Central Ministers and others, let alone a host of commissions set up by State Governments.

There have been earlier the Chagla Commission, Iyer Commission, Mudolkar Commission, Sarjoo Prasad Commission and Sarkaria Commission — all of them concerned with allegations of serious misconduct bordering on corruption on the part of mostly Ministers and other public servants. A peculiar feature in all these inquiries has been that the Commissions of Inquiry are almost always appointed when one government falls from power and another takes its place. When the fat is on fire, breast-beating and cries of political vendetta spring to their lips.

Article 226 of the Constitution is seized upon and the scene is shifted to forensic battles in courts of law. From the judicial summit, we have pronouncements silencing such pleas and reconciling with the realities of the situation. A line from the Supreme Court. 'In any democratic form of Government when a new Government is formed after the defeat of the previous, it will invariably consist of political rivals of the Ministers of the erstwhile Government. If that alone is considered sufficient for holding that the setting up of the Commission of Inquiry by the new Government is malafide, then Section 3 of the Act will automatically become a dead letter'.

Political loyalties being what they are, there is hardly a chance of any government ordering an inquiry

into the alleged misconduct or impropriety of any Minister or public functionary while in power. The moment he falls from grace or he is removed from the Cabinet, the same allegation of collateral character assassination could still be made. One wonders whether, if Lynskey's respondent had been a Minister in a Cabinet in this country, his fate would have been different. There is room for speculation.

All the same, the Supreme Court set at rest this controversy that electoral debacles should not be used as a ground to fight off probes into the conduct of Cabinet Ministers. I must hasten to add that the Das Commission which enquired into the charges against late Shri Kairon and the Chagla Commission, were ordered by the Congress Government against their own party Chief Minister and a Central Cabinet Minister. Pandit Nehru, some used to say, was 'an ineffectual angel, beating his luminous wings in vain'. But he was a democratic angel, and belatedly sometimes, yet he did strive to set high democratic traditions.

There is some truth in the criticism that these two commissions were exceptions if subsequent experiences are an indication. When talking of Commissions of Inquiry into so-called political corruption, one should remember that these always attract public imagination and are of vital concern to the people at large. The genesis of these Commissions has a background of political duress. It is understandable to white-wash the peccadillos of one's own political kith and kin. Even the Profumo scandal did not see the light of day all that quick. Watergate was not an overnight catharsis. But to permit political expediency to override public interest will be fatal to a democracy. Hence the imperative need for some kind of a system in-built in our Commissions of Inquiry Act whereby governments in power could be compelled to order a Commission of Inquiry into any matter of grave public importance without the party in power being in a position to block it.

The Lokpal Bill, if it becomes law, may be one suitable solution. Other-

wise, we may have to wait for the exposures of official abuses to be brought to light, but certainly not always brought to justice, by the periodical electoral processes. Are ministerial misdemeanours and official delinquencies to be always awarded a moratorium of five years, by which time public memories get blurred, and people lose interest?

What exactly happens in the wake of the findings of commissions turns one into a cynic. The public often being fickle, public opinion notoriously, all the world over, of short memory, and political forces ready to compromise — all combine together to blunt the edge of the findings of these commissions. In other words, a person having been found guilty by a Tribunal presided over by an eminent Judge of the High Court or the Supreme Court does not suffer from any serious disability in his public life except when, this has been in very few cases, followed by criminal proceedings.

Civil action is an unknown quantity. There is no disability attached to a person whose public conduct while in office has been strongly and publicly condemned by an eminent Tribunal. It means that the recommendations of these commissions lack teeth. Even on the government, recommendations of a Commission of Inquiry are not binding and are not backed up by penal sanction. This is their major weakness.

These commissions, more or less, function as a court of law. Statements of persons are recorded either by an affidavit or *viva voce* and, in any case, under oath. There is a public hearing, counsel appearing on behalf of all those concerned, including witnesses. Affected parties whose reputation is likely to be prejudicially affected are given an opportunity to be heard, to cross-examine the witnesses appearing against them and to adduce evidence in their defence and, by and large, the Rules of the Evidence Act are followed. It is clothed with the essential powers of a court of law and is always presided over by a high judicial dignitary.

Principles of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence are writ large. Listen to Justice Das. The Commission has, throughout this inquiry, constantly borne in mind two cardinal principles which bar the way to tyranny and arbitrariness. They are (i) that an individual is presumed innocent until the contrary is proved beyond doubt, and (ii) that no individual shall be condemned on suspicion, however strong. Yet, the pronouncements of this Commission are not binding on anyone.

It is most essential, there should be written into the Act and, perhaps, even in the Representation of Peoples' Act, that a person whose conduct has been adversely reported upon by a Commission of Inquiry should suffer some legal disqualification. He should be debarred from holding any elective office or contesting any election for a period and, if he is a civil servant, it should automatically spell his removal from public service. Otherwise, these commissions become an expensive luxury ending in futility. If the object is to ultimately cleanse public life and clean the Augean Stables, they should be invested with some sanctions.

Reverting again to allegations of official misconduct in various spheres, they often are the result of political rivalries. In this country, it is sad to say, everything has a political taint. When the BCG campaign was launched, instead of experts in the Public Health field debating its worth and effect, ignorant politicians made it a live issue, and drove one senior politician out of office. Be that as it may, the charges are always accompanied by a memorial with signatures, willing and unwilling, known and unknown.

The memorialists or the traducers frequently, after a time, lose their interest or are reluctant to press their charges for a variety of reasons and, more often than not, they do not have the wherewithal to conduct the 'prosecution' before the Commissions of Inquiry. In England, the Treasury Solicitor undertakes this job of collecting and assessing the evidence, deciding on its relevancy and there is a bureaucratic steel-frame standing outside the fray,

in the sidelines so to say, removed from partisan politics, to aid and assist a tribunal.

The Lynskey Tribunal has a purple passage about the work done by the Treasury Solicitor and the Superintendent and other officers of Scotland Yard who were associated with the inquiry. The greatest tribute to the integrity and impartiality of these officers and the Commission itself flows from the perorative submission of the main accused for the manner in which the Tribunal conducted the inquiries and the sense of fair play displayed by it. All this was made possible — the painstaking collection of evidence, the rejection of irrelevant testimony, the concentration on the essential aspects of the allegations — by the staff assisting the Commission. The trained personnel at the disposal of the Treasury Solicitor and borrowed detective skills from Scotland Yard were the elements that went up to the final successful conclusion of the inquiry in an atmosphere free from rancour.

Our Act suffered from this serious deficiency till the amendment in 1971 when Section 5-A was introduced making available at the disposal of the Commission, Investigating Officers or Investigating Agencies for the purpose of investigating into any matter pertaining to the inquiry, if it so desired. This was used effectively for the first time when the Sarkaria Commission went into operation in 1976. The arrangement was *ad hoc* and officers from the Central Bureau of Investigation and State Police were placed at the service of the Commission.

I must say that such *ad hoc* arrangements are unsatisfactory. It is necessary that there should be a set of permanent officers, call them what you will, who should be always available for the Commissions of Inquiry to assist such commissions in the preliminary work before the open 'trial' commences. The advantage is that valuable time is not lost after the appointment of the Commission and before officers are scratched together and put wise about their duties. A permanent set-up engaged only in such work will enjoy considerable

quantities of public confidence, and criticisms of biased conduct may be out of place. This body can be attached to the Ministry of Law and Justice to impart an additional safeguard to impartiality and a further element of independence.

I will come back again to the earlier point about the dental deficiencies of a Commission's findings. There should be again a permanent department in the Government, both Central and State who should be charged with the task of examining of reports of Commissions and following up the recommendations and their implementation. When they are left to the respective departments with no coordinating agency, they suffer from the eternal vice of red-tapism and delay. They die by sheer atrophy.

This department should function preferably under a senior Cabinet Minister or even the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister. Ultimately, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister are responsible for keeping the administration clean. It is not my suggestion that every little measure in implementation should be directly enforced by this department, but there should be a functionary outside the Ministry concerned accountable to Parliament and the people at large, and overseeing this work.

Cynical comments, whispered and loud, are heard about 'Government by Commissions'. These critics can be met only if we are able to demonstrate the effectiveness flowing from the findings of Inquiry Tribunals. Alas, the slow-acting antibiotics of these bodies are a perennial source of ridicule, culminating in Parkinson's vulgar comparison. To abolish commissions is to give free licence to arbitrary authority. The remedy lies not in leaving matters to be decided by electoral earthquakes but making these inquiry bodies more efficient. Give them more teeth. Follow-up action should be swift. Make it certain to be felt. Banish the present inadequacies of the Act, and then none will dare dismiss them as a contemptuous myth. In the absence of political will, all this will fail.

The new economics

MADHU LIMAYE

WHEN the Indira regime was swept away in the storm of the Lok Sabha elections in March 1977 and the Janata Government assumed power at the Centre, the state of the Indian economy was characterised by several contradictory tendencies. On the one hand the economy displayed certain positive aspects such as a large stock of foodgrains in the hands of the government, rising foreign exchange reserves, and an increase of about 10 per cent in industrial production in the financial year which was then coming to a close. On the other hand the economy revealed a number of disquieting features such as a fall in agricultural production of around 6 per cent, a rise of 11.6 per cent in the index of wholesale prices over the index of the previous financial year (1975-76) and recession in a large number of industries. The inflationary forces were again in full swing.

The rise in foreign exchange reserves was due to several factors. The foremost among these factors was the size of remittances from Indians abroad. This was the direct result of the anti-smuggling action initiated in 1974 after a long delay. The nation's economy was not however geared to absorbing and effectively using the sharp increase in foreign exchange. The second reason was the decelerating demand that prevailed in large parts of the country, for, with the contracting of the domestic demand, output was available for export purposes. Thus the increase in exports had also a negative aspect. There were also certain unhealthy features about the composition of our export trade. So far as textiles were concerned, the export of finished fabrics fell and the export of greys and yarn registered a sharp increase.

Since at the beginning of the new financial year certain negative aspects were already in existence, such as the decline of agricultural production and, especially, a fall in

the production of groundnuts and other oilseeds and cotton and so on, these negative features became aggravated because of the whiff of freedom which the country enjoyed after the electoral debacle of the India Congress. The pall of fear had been lifted. All the repressive laws which were in operation in the previous twenty months were either repealed or their application was discontinued. The traders and middlemen took advantage of this new found freedom to hoard commodities in short supply, to speculate in these goods and fully exploit the possibility of making windfall profits.

The new Janata Government, which was trying to come to grips with the economic problems, was baffled by this phenomenon of sharp increases in the prices of some basic articles of consumption like edible oils, dals, vegetables and so on. The people began to ask whether the shortfall in the production of these commodities had suddenly come about after March 1977 so as to justify this increase in price levels.

The fact of course was that the production of these basic items had been characterised by stagnation over a period of 15 years in the case of pulses and by violent fluctuations from year to year in the case of oilseeds. With regard to vegetables there were seasonal factors in operation. But the most important factor was the fact that the traders and middlemen knew that these commodities were in short supply and that their availability could not be increased in a short time, and so they took full advantage of these factors to push the prices up and enlarge their profits. The new government committed to liberal values and the non-application of MISA could do nothing about these anti-social activities, and the State governments appeared helpless in the face of this sudden increase in prices. The weakness of the State administration as well as the inadequacy of the framework law, were exposed.

The new budget of the Janata Government was very largely based on the exercises that had been undertaken under the aegis of the previous government. Since the new government took power at a time when the budget preparation was almost complete, the Finance Minister could not reshape the budget in the short time available to him. In fact, the final budget, which was hurriedly prepared and presented to the Lok Sabha in its second, extended session in the summer months, did not reflect in any significant way the thinking and ideas contained in the manifesto of the Janata Party. I therefore characterised the budget as 'an essentially Congress budget with Janata cosmetics'.

The budget made certain increased allocations for agriculture no doubt, but in other respects it continued the policy of giving concessions to the private corporate sector and excise relief for the affluent rich. It fulfilled the promise in the Janata election manifesto of raising the income tax exemption limit to Rs. 10,000 per year, but the propriety of this promise itself was of doubtful nature. It was one of the contradictory aspects of the Janata election manifesto. In a country with a very low average per capita income, there was absolutely no case for pushing upward the exemption limits for taxation purposes. This promise was a continuation of the long trend in the Indian economy whereby the organised urban sector established its preponderance in the national economy and secured several measures and concessions in furtherance of its interests.

Discussions within the Janata Party were inconclusive, it satisfied itself with an *ad hoc* resolution on the economic situation in August. Thereafter an Economic Policy Group was set up and it held 3 or 4 sittings. The Working Committee, which met in the second week of November 1977 considered the Group's draft proposals and entrusted the work of preparing the final draft to a drafting committee. The economic policy statement was finally adopted unanimously on November 14, 1977.

The statement of economic policy as it has emerged from the

deliberations of the Economic Policy Group and the Working Committee is, I think, a satisfactory statement. It avoids extremes and represents workable alternatives to the economic policies that prevailed under the Indira era. Although there has been some inevitable adjustment of views and compromises, it is not a hotch-potch document. However, it is not enough to formulate a good economic policy statement. We must also ensure that it is properly and effectively implemented. The implementation of the economic policies outlined in this statement almost wholly depend on three factors.

- (a) The government must show determination to take many unpleasant decisions, hurt some well-entrenched vested interests and at the same time evoke enthusiasm among the general people by convincing them that a new beginning is being made and that their co-operation is being sought in a collective endeavour to lift the economy out of the morass in which it has been languishing over the last fifteen years,
- (b) the streamlining of the administrative machinery is needed at all levels, and more especially, at the lower levels where an impetus has to be generated for implementing the programmes relating to agriculture and rural development, and, most importantly,
- (c) there should be a revitalisation of local bodies, harnessing of the voluntary agencies and cooperative institutions for rural development.

The economic policy statement has said that the average annual rate of growth of our national economy was 3.5% and that in order to realise the aspirations of the people the growth rate will have to be raised to 7 per cent. Some people have characterised this target as unrealistic. There has been criticism on the ground that the capital-output ratio of our economy has been continuously rising. The

criticism is based on the premise that this trend will continue and will even accentuate and that, in any case it is impossible to reverse it. The criticism is also based on the assumption that the Janata Government will not be able substantially to increase the mobilisation of savings and convert these savings into productive investment.

Superficially the criticism on both the counts would seem to be irrefutable. However, giving the necessary will and shift in the pattern of investment it is theoretically possible to overcome these hurdles. Some economists have pointed out that it is possible to bring about a change in the capital-output ratio provided emphasis is laid on quickly maturing productive projects, and a deliberate effort is made to undertake schemes involving less capital expenditure and a more effective utilisation of the available manpower. It is also necessary to take firm action so that sectional vested interests are not allowed to aggrandise themselves at the cost of the nation.

In the last ten years or more we have allowed the organised urban sector to appropriate a large part of the national income for themselves. There has been talk about Indian labour being cheap but if the pay rates and the emoluments that prevail in the organised urban sector like foreign companies and banks and the L. I. C. are allowed to prevail, it would be very difficult to reduce costs and make supreme efforts to achieve the targets with regard to savings, investment and output. The economic policy statement recognises that ostentatious consumption will have to be curbed and habits of saving, austerity and *swadeshi* will have to be inculcated. But this calls for strong measures on a wide front.

The corporate private sector has been very critical of the economic policy statement of the Janata Party. The employees' organisations also are likely to take a critical attitude towards the economic approach of the Janata Party. The reasons are not far to seek.

The corporate private sector has relied for expansion mainly on the injection of investible resources from outside. The capital market

has been dull over a period of years, and there has not been much investment by private investors. Institutional finance had been readily available to them. The savings mobilised by our credit institutions have been continuously diverted for the expansion of the private corporate sector. No attempt was made to mobilise internal resources for the purpose of expansion.

Since cheap institutional finance could be availed of, the companies did not bother to maximise internal resources and plough back profits for the purpose of expansion. The profits generated were squandered. The cream was appropriated by unscrupulous businessmen through underhand dealings. Part of the profits were frittered away on ever increasing perquisites and amenities for the top managerial personnel and relatives of the entrepreneurs. Some was distributed in the form of dividend, and not an insignificant part was distributed as bonus. It is absolutely clear that this cannot continue.

In the public sector also there has been a lot of wasteful expenditure. The top people have been indulging in loot, large sums being spent on entertainment, guest houses and the like. The pricing policies imposed on this sector by the government also had a negative effect on the maximisation of profits. The high level of emoluments for the employees of the public sector reinforced the negative effect on the generation of surpluses.

The policy statement of the Janata Party has in a few pithy sentences brought out the need for a radical departure in this regard. The statement says 'In view of the present needs of investible resources for agricultural and rural development, both the public sector and the organised private sector must generate surpluses and use their own internal resources for growth and expansion. This would imply that their productive efficiencies must improve and their pricing and output policies must be so adjusted as to generate surpluses. These surpluses should not be thrown away by way of indiscriminate distribution of dividends and bonus and increasing the

perks and amenities of the top people. These surpluses must be saved and invested for growth and expansion thus relieving the public exchequer and the banking system of the need for continuously channelising further investible funds, which can then be diverted towards agricultural development and building up of cottage and decentralised industries.'

The implementation of these policies will hurt a lot of vested interests. The entrepreneurs and large business houses will not like it at all. The top managerial personnel both of the private sector companies as well as the public sector companies will resist any reduction in their lavish standard of living. The public sector employees will not like it either. The L. I. C. and the bank employees seem to feel that these institutions were created and nationalised for their welfare and not for the expansion of the national economy and the promotion of national interests.

In certain circles it has become a fashion to say that while the public sector is inefficient the private sector is both efficient and profitable. This is not at all true. The fact is that all the unprofitable but necessary lines of production were allocated to the public sector. The pricing policies of the public sector also sub-served the private corporate sector. The public enterprises were not allowed to charge commercial prices. The private sector however was allowed to reserve for itself lush pastures and make bumper profits. It was allowed to evade taxes and cheat the exchequer. The unscrupulous businessmen took the cream out of the old established industries in various ways such as commissions on purchases, evasion of taxes, etc., in order to build industrial empires. The number of sick units in the private corporate sector bears testimony to the fact that most private businesses have been not only inefficient but thoroughly corrupt.

On the other hand, while there has been inefficiency and waste enough in the public sector industries, some of these industries have already shown that, given the public

spirit and the necessary will, these industries can be run very efficiently. The truth is that both the sectors have to be purged of the evils that afflict them. The economic policy statement wants the public sector to be geared not to the needs of the private corporate sector as it has so far been, it must in future promote the interests of agricultural development, small scale industries and cottage industries.

The private sector does not like the economic policy statement also because it prohibits the diversion of savings mobilised in the rural areas—savings from agricultural and rural sectors to the organised sector in the urban areas, especially the private corporate sector.

There has been a lot of criticism of the subsidy given by the government for the distribution of food-grains through the public distribution network. There have also been loud protests against the subsidies given for the supply of fertilisers to the farmers. The public opinion which is controlled and shaped by the private corporate sector conveniently forgets the massive subsidies that were being given to private industries in the form of development rebates and investment allowances. While the budget gives the figures of subsidies to consumers and farmers, subsidies to private entrepreneurs were revealed in monetary terms. The capitalists who talked so much about the virtues of a free market were not prepared to pay the free market price for capital. They always insist on cheap credits, rebates and allowances.

The whole growth of the private corporate sector has been based on artificial props provided by the government. All this cannot be allowed to continue. They will have to finance their expansion by increasing their own efficiency, reducing costs and by eliminating the 'distribution of largesses' through tax evasion, unethical commissions, black market profits and the distribution of dividends and bonuses.

It has been a fashion among the urban elite, including academic

people, to make the so-called rural rich the whipping boy of the Indian economy. Nobody seems to ask questions about the urban rich, about the affluent classes in the cities and about all those black-marketeers, bogus exporters and importers, hoarders and speculators. The so-called rich peasants are producers, they more than doubled wheat output in six years. Not only this there are far greater inequalities between the rural sector and the urban sector than within the rural sector itself. Similarly, inequalities between the urban poor and the urban rich are greater than inequalities between the rural rich and the rural poor. Yet, these professors and economists do not hesitate to declaim on the need for further scaling down of the land ceilings in the rural areas. The responsibility to implement these land reforms is not theirs! They can always blame the political parties and government for the lack of political will.

I would like to ask these elites a brutal question: are they prepared to accept a cut in their standards of living in the short run in the interests of the nation? Are these elites (in which I, of course, include politicians, legislators and the Ministers) prepared to set an example by foregoing the use of durable consumer goods which characterise the consumption of the affluent societies of Euro-America, Japan and Russia such as room air-conditioners, refrigerators and television sets? In these affluent societies these durable consumer goods are enjoyed by *most of the people and not only by the top people*. In India, however, they are the exclusive privilege of the upper classes, especially those in the urban areas.

Organised labour in India reminds one of Lenin's description of the labour aristocracy. Of course, all comparisons are relative. We must not forget the context. Whereas an LIC employee's annual income, including bonus and allowances, is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 12,000, there are large parts of the country where agricultural labourers do not get even Rs. 300 a year. Peons in banks enjoy emoluments which even

middle and small farmers do not enjoy. When such wide differentials prevail among the working people themselves, there is no need to emphasise the colossal differences between the urban rich and the rural poor. That is self-evident.

So far as the inequalities in the rural areas are concerned, though they are not on the same scale as urban-rural inequalities, it would be well to realise that they are not only economic. The social inequalities are much more glaring. The conflict that is surfacing in many rural areas is not a conflict between the rich and the landless and the rural poor. There is of course a conflict of interests between the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. But it is not only an economic conflict relating to wages, it is also a social conflict. In the last thirty years, there has been a shift in the power balance in the rural areas. Power has increasingly passed out of the hands of the upper castes (thakurs, brahmins and baniyas) into the hands of kisan communities. In the next stage that has already begun, there is bound to be a tussle between the harijans and the backward communities and those sections of the population who came to power in the rural areas in the last two decades.

At the time of the achievement of independence, the condition of the urban working classes was most unsatisfactory. A lot of devoted workers dedicated themselves to the task of organising the industrial working class. Their efforts were largely successful. That the trade union movement in later years came to be dominated increasingly by economism and narrow sectional interest is another matter. Unless a band of devoted workers comes up in the rural areas, undertakes the work of rural development and dedicates itself to the task of organising the rural poor, the landless and the marginal farmers, a further shift in the power balance is not possible.

It is not enough to fix minimum agricultural wages. Alternative employment must be provided in areas with low wages. It is not

helpful to further lower ceilings through legislation. These measures will largely remain on paper. Even the existing laws have not been fully implemented. Legislation is effective only when it broadly represents the existing relation of forces. Legislation far ahead of the prevailing power balance will remain ineffective and unimplemented.

The urban-rural hiatus vitiates all aspects of investment policies. Billions of rupees are spent on providing water, electricity, transport, roads and housing for large urban centres. It was considered necessary to satisfy the urban thirst by a plentiful supply of coca cola. Our values are topsy turvy. A water supply scheme entailing an outlay of Rs. 500 crores was and is being considered for the Bombay city when 1,30,000 villages go without pure drinking water! Should the Janata Government permit this? The expansion of cities must stop and funds should be diverted for rural areas.

Much play is being made of the concept of bonus as a deferred wage. What percentage of bonus is to be regarded as a deferred wage — 4%, 8% or 20%? In fact it is, as S.A. Dange remarked to me (of course privately!) a relic of the feudal past, the typical *bakshish* complex. Unfortunately, the higher the emoluments the greater the quantum of this bonus. Those who get less continue to get less under this percentage formula.

The Compulsory Deposit Scheme was terminated by the Janata government. The Bonus Ordinance and Act, too, was repealed and the pre-emergency position was restored. All this was right, but there can be an excess of everything. The foreign companies and big companies are making large profits. The foreign companies repatriate a large part of these profits under one guise or another abroad and large Indian companies appropriate these profits towards perquisites, dividends, commissions, bonus and so on. These companies are pushing up the labour costs. Has society no claims over their windfall gains? Has the future generation no claims on these profits? Have the unemployed no

claims over these surpluses? Are they to remain islands of prosperity in the midst of poverty?

The managerial personnel in these large concerns are the greatest culprits. They are setting a pernicious example by their lavish and ostentatious living. The guidelines recently framed by the Company Affairs Ministry are shocking. There is no concept of social justice, of deferring consumption, of austerity or of sharing the burden equitably. The emoluments and perquisites of these people have to be drastically brought down. Ministers and legislators too have to change their style of living. Otherwise it would be idle to give lectures to the workers on the need for social justice and on the need for saving and investment. The values of a elitist society and the goals of the Janata economic policy cannot be reconciled.

There is no country in the world which has achieved economic development without making great sacrifices. Current consumption has to be deferred in order to achieve future prosperity. The Russian people made tremendous sacrifices in the initial years of their planned economy. Although Communist propaganda continued to speak of a rising standard of living, the fact is that the Russian working people made heroic sacrifices and underwent untold sufferings in order to build their economy. The industrial revolution in England and Western Europe was fed, firstly, by colonial exploitation and, secondly, by the exploitation of their own working classes. Expansion in America was based on vast natural resources, just as the natural resource of cheap oil helped the unprecedented economic expansion in America, Western Europe and Japan in the post-second-war years.

In India, the problem of expansion cannot be resolved without sweat and tears, without sacrifices. These sacrifices must be proportionately borne. Since the rural sector has been the greatest sufferer, social justice demands that further economic development should be financed by the urban sector. At least the urban sector should not exploit the

rural sector in furtherance of its own narrow sectional interests. Whether the Janata Government will be able to hurt so many sectional interests it is difficult to say. What is called for is a basic shift

Our public distribution system of subsidised foodgrains and sugar has so far covered only 60 million people in the urban areas. The rural population which really is in need of subsidised commodities does not get any benefit from this system. Recently, I had an interesting experience when I visited Ambala. At a meeting attended by the professional people I was asked questions about the invidious distinction made between cities like Delhi and Bombay, on the one hand, and similar places like Ambala, on the other. They said that the sugar ration which they got was only half of the sugar ration given in the large metropolitan areas. I told them that their protest was justified, but they should also remember that the rural areas such as my own constituency were worse off in this respect. Sometimes they do not get any subsidised levy sugar at all.

A public distribution system which is so heavily weighted in favour of the organised urban sector cannot be said to promote social justice and popular welfare. Whatever be the other failings of the communist countries they always saw to it that as far as the basic necessities were concerned the common people got them at reasonable prices. The prices of these basic commodities were not allowed to increase even marginally for years together. Unless we do that, the promises in the Janata Party manifesto and the economic policy statement cannot be fulfilled. Once this is done, demands for increased D.A. can be kept within reasonable bounds.

In the last fifteen years the public sector and private sector manufacturing has not provided a large number of jobs. The increase in job opportunities in this period was less than two million in these sectors. In mining and quarrying also, there has not been much additional employment. There has only been transfer of employment from the

private sector to the public sector as a result of coal nationalisation. Apart from transport, the expansion of employment in the public sector has been largely unproductive employment in ever expanding administrative services.

Only expansion of small industries and village industries, and massive programmes of small irrigation and other rural works, can absorb the existing backlog of unemployment as well as the new entrants to the labour force. The Janata Party has called for a reorientation of industrial policy, so that the task of clothing the entire population of the country can be performed by the decentralised sector. Production capacity in leather and footwear and soaps (washing and bathing) has to be transferred to the decentralised sector.

All the constructive workers engaged in the work of rural development and small scale industries have to be mobilised for these tasks. They have to produce a scheme of reorganisation and expansion of these industries. They must show the initiative and capacity to satisfy the needs of the entire population in respect of these three items. So far there was no adequate policy framework for these people to exercise their faculties and capacities. Now the policy framework has been provided. Will they face up to the challenge? So far certain crumbs have been thrown at khadi and village industries, and the constructive workers were asked to co-exist with the leaders of the organised sector. Now the approach is basically different. Within ten years the organised sector in these three industries has to be totally dismantled.

If the decentralised sector and constructive workers can successfully meet the challenge, there are unlimited possibilities of expansion for the decentralised sector also in other sectors such as matches, gur, khandsari, rice-pounding and so on. If intermediate technology is devised for the spinning process, even the spinning sector can be transferred to the decentralised sector in a phased manner. The implementation of this programme will in-

involve revolutionary changes in the economic structure and create job opportunities for millions of people. A vast training programme will have to be undertaken to fit the 'reserve army of unemployed' for these new jobs

Another most important factor on which will depend the success of the Janata economic programme is the streamlining of the institutional framework. The community development schemes, instead of promoting agricultural expansion, has been a burden on the exchequer. Most of the allocations made for the scheme have been spent on administrative overheads, such as the construction of block headquarters, housing, emoluments, maintenance of jeeps, petrol and so on. Very little of these allocations have gone into agricultural expansion or rural development. It is therefore necessary to economise on administrative expenditure and make funds available for economic development.

The panchayat raj system, barring a few States, has been a still-born child. These institutions must be recognised and vitalised and an outlet provided for the people with energy and initiative in the rural areas, otherwise the work of economic development will suffer. The Committee on Decentralisation which is being set up by the Centre must go into the whole question and produce workable recommendations as early as possible. The economic policy statement visualises a crucial role for the panchayat raj institutions and voluntary agencies, including the co-operatives. Unless the people's initiative is released and fully harnessed the economic programme cannot be implemented.

The corrupt administrative machinery cannot be expected to stimulate economic expansion. The bureaucracy will continue to create hurdles in the path of expansion. They have developed a vested interest in procrastination and delay. Corruption and red tape will effectively kill initiative at all levels. I am afraid that the Shah Commission hearings will have the unintended effect of making the bureaucracy more procedure-conscious. They will

become even more rigid and hide-bound in their day to day functioning.

If the procedures are not radically overhauled, if decisions are not quickly made, if risks are not taken and if responsibility is not properly fixed, no breakthrough on the economic front is possible. Decisions made *bonafide* should not be punished. Making of mistakes is inevitable. No human being is infallible. What should be punished is malice and corruption, and not genuine mistakes sincerely made in the course of fulfilling one's duty. The decision-making process, therefore, must be made efficient. This is the prerequisite for a successful implementation of economic programmes

The standard of living of the Indian people is undoubtedly pitiful. It would be cruel on the part of the government to expect them to make further sacrifices. But they can contribute labour, and it is an important asset. Manpower must be fully utilised for creating productive assets. If the labour costs are continuously pushed up, the manpower, far from being an asset, will become a liability. Therefore there is need to keep labour costs under control. Since almost all the income of the poor families is spent on basic necessities, wide coverage by the public distribution system both in terms of the number of basic commodities as well as the population is necessary.

The capitalists must be forced to change their outlook. Instead of maximising profit per unit of output they should maximise the volume of production and the total volume of profits. Profits must be ploughed back. A drive must be launched to create a new climate where tax evasion and black-marketing would be regarded as sins. Since a discipline has to come from within, external constraints will not take us far.

In my opinion the battle for democracy has not been finally won. Democracy is still on trial. If democracy does not solve the basic economic problems it will fail. The former Prime Minister believes that

India cannot be governed democratically, and that the only solution of India's problems is some kind of an authoritarian rule under the leadership of a strong leader. She feels that she alone can provide such an authoritarian leadership. The Janata Party neither desires to emulate her authoritarian methods nor is there any leader in the Janata Party who aspires to this kind of leadership.

The Janata Party and its government must therefore make haste. Already eight months have passed. The coming elections to the assemblies in some of the major States of India will distract attention in the next two months. Thereafter only four years will remain till the time comes for the Janata Party to ask for a renewal of the popular mandate. The Janata Party should not hesitate to take unpleasant decisions for fear of incurring unpopularity. Ad hocism will not save it from the ultimate displeasure of the people. The only chance of winning another vote of confidence is to act now and act in a decisive manner. This is the pre-condition for the successful implementation of the economic policy programme.

The economic performance in the last eight months has not been very satisfactory. There is not likely to be any increase in industrial production over the last year. The possibility of improvement in agricultural performance has been very largely destroyed by the unprecedented natural calamity which had overtaken the major agricultural producing regions of coastal Andhra and Tamil Nadu. Power shortage has reappeared despite a good monsoon and full reservoirs. This will affect adversely industrial production. The Energy Ministry must take effective action to improve the functioning of the power plants and step up the utilisation of their installed capacity. Failure on the energy front will doom the agricultural programmes to defeat.

These are some of the acute problems with which we are faced. There is little enough cause for complacency. However, a pessimistic approach can only dampen enthusiasm. Let us therefore march ahead with determination, courage and hope.

Return to the village

M Y GHORPADE

INHERENT in the return to the village is the basic awareness that, over the years, we have drifted away from the village, resulting in the relative neglect of the rural areas, where a vast majority of the people live, in the hope that some day their lot will improve. Many still live in the village because they have nowhere else to go. The poor and the downtrodden who muster enough courage to go to the cities in search of a better deal have to live in slums and be alienated, socially and psychologically, from their moorings. The rich, of course, become richer by riding on the backs of the poor and by refusing to climb down to earth and stand shoulder to shoulder with the common man. This is not a melodramatic description of the situation that has developed not only

in India but in many other developing countries of the world.

Before the advent of the British there was a kind of socio-economic equilibrium in the rural areas. It was a subsistence, self-sufficient economy to which everybody belonged. Even the Gods and the rural rich were part of the interdependent, economic and cultural scene.

There was inequality but no alienation. The village was a well-knit community with a distinctive life and values shared by all. It was not a market economy and milk was not sold for money; and so, whatever was grown and produced in the village was available for the village folk to consume. Modern pockets of urban purchasing power had not sprung up to suck away the essentials of life and deprive the vast

majority to benefit a few. Population was in check because of natural calamities and a variety of other reasons. It was part of the balance of nature, and ecological and environmental harmony was not threatened.

All this changed, advertently or inadvertently, by the process of history. The British came and with them came western science and technology which subjugated India and, at the same time, put India on the road to what we call modernisation. This process had its own mechanical logic. The British may have chopped off the thumbs of some of our most skilled artisans who produced the famous Dacca muslin, but many more were deprived of their livelihood because of the inevitable consequences of the sort of development that took place, based on the automatic machine and the individual profit motive. The textile mills deprived countless numbers of rural spinners and weavers of their livelihood.

The modern rice mill not only deprived rice of much of its nutrition but a vast number of people, especially women, of their traditional work. Handpounding of rice became increasingly obsolete. White rice became the symbol of urban taste or, rather, lack of taste. The rice mill owners became fat with profit like the textile mill owner and the oil mill owner and many other vested interests who did what was most profitable for them to do in a given situation. It was not their business to think of the consequences of their enterprise on the livelihood of others engaged in activity which would now become obsolete.

In the West, artisans and workers engaged in traditional occupations got fully absorbed in modern industry at a higher wage and higher productivity. This is because of their favourable ratio of labour, land and natural resources. But in India and many other developing countries, the use of western technology no doubt increased the productivity and wages of a few but at the cost of the many, who not only could not be absorbed in the new type of work but were deprived of their traditional livelihood. The ratio of

labour, land and natural resources worsened as a result of the population explosion.

Obviously, what was a viable economic solution in the West was grossly inadequate under our conditions. Mechanical aping of the West was and is suicidal. Mahatma Gandhi saw this as perhaps no other Indian has, and warned us against its evils. Gandhi said that the poor can be helped not by mass production but by production by the masses. In any case, what the private owners of capital produce is for those who have the purchasing power, and not to satisfy the human needs of the poor who have no money to buy. The poor will never have the money to buy goods and services unless they are employed. They cannot be fully employed unless that is the primary object and the starting point of all our thinking and economic activity.

To achieve this object, development must be appropriate to our conditions. We have seen that the benefits of development do not automatically trickle down to the poor, and full employment is not the automatic by-product of modern development. Moreover, if purchasing power is concentrated in a few urban pockets and large numbers of people have hardly any purchasing power, then industrialisation itself gets stunted and stultified by a limited and circumscribed home market whose full potential remains untapped and undeveloped.

It may not be inappropriate to quote here what I said in my budget speech, in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, on the first of March 1976, with regard to the strategy for fuller employment.

In the ultimate analysis, employment is the great antidote to poverty. Urban poverty is largely the spillover of rural poverty. Therefore, a massive attack against poverty can only be made by maximising work and work places in the rural areas. Salaried jobs are limited in number. The number of persons in our State employed on a monthly salary basis is about 10 lakhs while our population is more than three crores. The

employment potential per unit of investment is most favourable in agriculture and allied activities. That is because such activity is labour intensive. It also results in the production of food and other goods and services most vitally needed by the common man.

‘The surest way to employ more and more people and increase their real earnings is to develop agriculture and land and water resources. This is why we give the highest priority to irrigation and power in our Plans. We do try to provide work to as many rural people as possible through our Plan schemes. Whenever hardship is caused because the landless workers cannot find employment in agriculture, and Plan schemes are inadequate to meet the situation, additional employment is provided by the use of scarcity relief funds. But when there is deep drought, massive relief operations and employment become unavoidable, as in the case of the last drought when several lakhs of people in the affected areas had to be provided work to keep body and soul together. At one time 9 lakhs of rural people were employed. This virtually amounted to a rural employment guarantee scheme. The ratio between the wages a person can earn and the price per kilogram of the basic foodgrain he consumes, is a fair measure of the degree of hardship caused in different areas, in different seasons. Even during normal times there is need to stabilise and strengthen our approach to rural unemployment.

‘The concept of the Land Army has to be developed as an effective instrument to mobilise rural manpower for building productive assets. While doing so, skills have to be imparted to the rural unemployed so that they are enabled to stand on their own. This will enable us to step up the productivity of land and the real income of people below the poverty line.

‘The capacity to generate adequate employment, both rural and urban, will also depend on our economic philosophy and capacity to develop a technology which is appropriate to our circumstances. Capital intensive technology of the developed

world may be necessary in certain fields but, by and large, for the economic system to become self-reliant and self-generating, our technology will have to be consistent with the incomes and saving capacity of the Indian people. What is scarce here is not labour but capital. Hence our production strategy will have to be cheap, relatively simple, making maximum use of local materials for local consumption and use. It has to be basically a labour intensive technology to produce consumer goods, agricultural implements and equipment for the common man and within his reach.

'It is obvious that western technology designed primarily for the purpose of saving labour will not enable us to abolish inequalities and reach full employment in the foreseeable future. This is what I might call a restatement of Gandhian economics in terms of the modern economic idiom. Our scientists, administrators and entrepreneurs will have to collaborate more purposefully to find an Indian solution to the problem of growth and stability. The task is to re-establish a healthy basis of existence for the vast majority of the people, by means of an appropriate technology, which would be vastly superior in productivity to the traditional technology, while, at the same time, being vastly cheaper and simpler than the highly sophisticated and enormously capital intensive technology of the west.'

These concepts need to be quantified and analysed in the context of the Indian situation. Only then will they yield practical solutions in the shape of policies and programmes. In Karnataka, for instance, there are about 5 million students studying in various educational institutions from the primary to the university level. Assuming that about one tenth this number, viz., half a million students pass out or leave these institutions every year and need to be provided with some work, the question arises—can we provide so many with work and if so in what manner and at what cost?

In the Indian technological context, the average capital cost of creating one job is about Rs.

20,000 in the rural areas. This means that creating half a million new jobs every year will need an annual capital investment of ten thousand million rupees, which is well beyond our means, at this stage of our development. On the other hand, if Rs 2000 to 4000 were adequate to create one job, then half a million jobs will need only Rs 100 to 200 crores per annum. But this will also mean a relatively lower wage level and a more modest life-style. It means exercising a conscious choice at every step to favour a strategy of growth and production which enables a larger number of persons to produce a given output rather than a few using expensive, sophisticated machines and getting high wages. It is the acceptance of a strategy which prefers five persons getting Rs. 5 a day to one person getting Rs. 25 to achieve a given output.

It must also be remembered that technology is only one of the many factors determining the nature and content of development. Fuller employment involves the choice of a whole package of inter-related products, practices, programmes and policies. The purpose of such choice should be productive full employment and the scientific and sensible use of our natural resources. It must be an integrated economic strategy and not isolated, unrelated decisions which will not make a dent on the situation as a whole.

Whether it is the national policy on wages, incomes and prices or the industrial policy, labour policy, planning priorities, fiscal policy, social philosophy or political ideology and action—all should subserve a consistent policy and programme and not pull in different directions and make the confusion more confounded. Otherwise we will have a schizophrenic development based on hypocritical dualism with one set of standards for the modern urban sector and a different set of values for the rural areas which will just not work.

The relationship between the urban and rural, the capital intensive and the labour intensive, the big and the small, the modern and the

less modern should be symbiotic and not parasitic, mutually reinforcing and not rapacious, complementary and not contradictory. In other words, our economic strategy must be a consistent whole and not a jumble of disjointed activities where the capital intensive and financially more profitable ventures will finish off the labour intensive and economically more vulnerable ones. These values and priorities will have to permeate and transform the whole process of production and distribution. Fiscal and financial policies and incentives will have to fully support this structure and strategy of balanced growth. Detailed blue prints containing short and long term plans and programmes will have to be worked out for every product and every sector to fit into a consistent, self-sustaining model of growth, giving the highest priority to employment and the production of goods and services needed by the common man.

The guidelines for the choice of technology and economic strategy will have to consist of an optimum combination of basic needs, employment, growth rate, social participation, environmental impact and least cost. The product mix itself will have to be altered in favour of the poor and the needy. Fuller employment will give them the necessary purchasing power. The value of the rupee will have to be stabilised within the purchasing power of the poor, at least in terms of certain essential commodities, in order to ensure growth with stability and social justice. We are told that the 20 million tons of food stocks that has been built up in the country is not moving because the rural folk do not have adequate purchasing power. This brings into sharp focus the imbalance that has crept into our economic system. We are also told that 114 million jobs will have to be created in the rural areas by the end of the century, of which agriculture can be made to generate 54 million.

Apart from agriculture and massive rural development works such as minor and medium irrigation, soil conservation, afforestation, communications, etc., the scope for

self-employment in rural areas will have to be stepped up considerably in keeping with this policy. Mahatma Gandhi told us with characteristic candour and simplicity that when in doubt think of the poor man and ask yourself the question whether the action you contemplate will help the poor or not. He also laid great stress on limiting our wants so that what is available is shared more equitably by all and not by just a few. This is the only way to stop the flow of talent and resources from the villages to the cities and the growth of urban islands of high income for a few at the cost of the many.

It is not as though no progress was achieved in the last 30 years since Independence. Starting with irrigation and power projects, much was done which strengthened the nation. Without this industrial and scientific base, it would have been difficult for us even to safeguard our freedom and our democracy. But no growth is free from distortions and imbalances. The progress we have achieved should itself enable us to identify and iron out the distortions, provided we have the political will and the capability to do so.

Let us take the example of textiles. The *charkha* symbolises Gandhi's thinking on the subject. The concept of the *charkha* will naturally have to be modified in the modern context without sacrificing its essence. The Gandhian *charkha* does not enable a person to earn a living wage today, though it certainly gives some supplementary income and considerable satisfaction. Logically, therefore, the Ambar *charkha* was developed which enables a person to earn Rs. 3 to 4 per day.

The mini textile mill or 'Lok Vastra' (Peoples Cloth) unit sponsored by the Karnataka State Khadi & Village Industries Board is a further improvement. It is a low cost, labour intensive, small-scale unit with great potential for wider application. It is being successfully operated at Bangalore. The daily wage in the spinning unit is Rs 5 to 6 while the weavers earn Rs. 8 per day. Each spinning

unit costing Rs. 1 lakh produces about 50 Kgs. of yarn per shift, sufficient for 40 handlooms producing in all 320 square metres of cloth per day. It is intended to provide standard cloth of 20 to 40 counts which big textile mills find uneconomic to produce. It permits decentralised spinning, weaving and even processing without sacrificing quality. It employs an appropriate labour intensive technology though it uses a certain amount of power. There is distinct possibility of using non-conventional sources of energy from bio-gas plants, wind mills etc.

Comparison with a big textile factory is extremely favourable to the Lok Vastra Unit. An investment of Rs. 30 million in a standard capital intensive cotton spinning mill results in 25,000 spindles producing 4500 Kgs of yarn per day and employing 300 persons per shift. The capital investment per worker employed works out to Rs. 50,000. An investment of the same order of Rs 30 million in decentralised Lok Vastra spinning units will result in 1.29 lakh spindles in 300 different units, producing 16,200 Kgs. of yarn per day of the same quality (33 metric counts) and employing 4500 persons per shift which works out to a capital investment of about Rs 7000 per worker employed. If we take the spinning and weaving together, then the capital per worker employed goes down to Rs 2000 and the persons employed per shift increases to 7200 in the case of the Lok Vastra Unit. Here is a case where both the output and employment per unit of capital employed is far better in the decentralised unit as compared to a capital intensive spinning mill.

If the Lok Vastra type of production is to be developed and enabled to grow rapidly, a number of concomitant steps will have to be taken. Otherwise, even a good idea will not survive a sterile economic and social environment. A whole package of policies and programmes will have to be worked out to its last detail if a healthy, employment-oriented type of production is to survive the competition from the more capital intensive and profitable units

In this case, industry will have to manufacture Lok Vastra units in sufficient numbers. All encouragement will have to be given to local machine fabricating facilities and conditions created in which appropriate technology is not only identified but used on a wide scale. If we want a genuine agro-based, labour intensive, decentralised development to maximise employment and human satisfaction, then every other activity in the economy should be designed to strengthen and support this growth and not allowed to run counter to or conflict with it.

At present, the capital intensive textile mills are asked to produce the Peoples Cloth which they find uneconomic or not adequately profitable. Millions of rupees of incentives are given, in one form or the other, to make this cheaper cloth available to the people. But yet the people do not get enough of it. Why not enable the decentralised sector to produce the Peoples Cloth on a massive scale? The same incentives could be given to this sector. The available technology will suit that product. Once such a decision is taken, the organised sector should be prohibited from producing cloth which will compete with the decentralised sector.

Logically speaking, in a poor country like ours, the number of varieties of cloth should be drastically reduced, reserving for each sector what it can appropriately produce. What the decentralised labour intensive sector can produce need not be produced by the capital intensive sector. Excise duties should be so levied on the finer varieties of cloth that they are no threat to the coarser varieties produced in the decentralised sector. Simultaneously, research and development effort should be concentrated to enable the small man with a relatively inexpensive machine to produce more and better quality cloth so that productivity and the wage in decentralised production improves steadily. A host of soft ware problems, from supply of raw materials to marketing and management will have to be successfully tackled.

The Swadeshi movement during the freedom struggle got everybody's

co-operation including that of the textile magnets because less of imports from England meant greater scope for profits from the indigenous textile mills. But the extension of the logic of Swadeshi to the home market to maximise employment by protection and reservation in favour of the decentralised labour intensive sector, and the exclusion of the capital intensive sector from certain areas of production, may not invoke the same nationalistic response from the textile magnets. Here, there is a conflict of interest which needs to be resolved in favour of the unemployed poor.

In the ultimate analysis, there is no conflict of interest because, unless the purchasing power of the rural masses is stepped up through massive rural employment, the process of industrialisation itself will be stifled by a limited home market. But this is a macro consideration which is not likely to influence micro decisions concerned with maximising not total employment and output, but profit of the individual unit. A mixed economy has its own peculiar problems which will have to be sorted out.

Certain interests who take a limited view, may not look upon such a policy with favour. They may consider it a threat to their growth and additional benefits at the expense of the rest of society. This is where hard political decisions will have to be taken not only in public speeches but in actual implementation if we are serious about providing employment to the rural poor. The structure of politics and elections will have to be largely freed from money power which is concentrated in the organised sector. Otherwise, there will be a disconcerting gap between what politicians say and what they are constrained to do. It is the Gordian knot of this dichotomy between speech and action that needs to be cut if public life is to regain its credibility and Gandhi resurrected.

The same logic applies, more or less, to every field of economic activity. The effect of factor prices and the whole structure of incentives

on the choice of technology will have to be carefully studied in order to induce economy-wide changes in factor combinations towards greater employment, in the context of the existing economic situation. Measures will have to be taken to shift consumer demand to labour intensive products and encourage private firms to utilise labour intensive methods. Public sector and co-operative units will have to show the way. Appropriate management and organisational efficiency is a crucial factor in the spread of decentralised production.

This calls for a level of co-ordination and commitment which cannot be taken for granted. The need for discipline and the right attitude cannot be ignored. Considerable innovation and experimentation will have to be done to see what works best under our conditions. Structural changes will have to be undertaken wherever necessary. Scientists and technologists will have to go to the factory and the field before deciding on research priorities and projects. Technological innovation will have to be institutionalised at the local level, linking research and development to social needs and clear cut national objectives.

Available technology will have to be modified and improved upon and new, appropriate technology developed as a part of this movement towards employment-oriented production, to improve the quality of life of the poor. Comprehensive, national science and technology plans will have to go hand in hand with developmental plans if the products needed by the poor are to be produced in the most appropriate manner. In short, our entire social, economic and political ethos will have to undergo a basic qualitative change towards the village and the people living there. Economic theory and practice will have to take on a human face, of the poor and the meek, who mostly live in the decentralised villages of India. The call for the return to the village is essentially a plea and a pledge to tackle the problem at the grass roots level, in the simple faith and sound conviction that 'small is beautiful'.

Political transition

RAJNI KOTHARI

THIRTY years after Independence we have been through a year of major consequence to our future. It was a year that once again, after five years of stagnation and stupor, aroused expectations. This time not from some overpowering individual who promised deliverance from a grim reality but, rather, from a process of restructuring both power and consciousness in which a large number of people at various levels of the polity have participated

It is in the nature of such change that expectations keep far ahead of

achievement. This gives rise to feelings of frustration and let-down, a natural concomitant of abstract hope that takes no account of either the historical context or the specific instrumentalities through which it is sought to be realized. Criticisms arising from such discontent are essential, the ruling elite is made sensitive to shifts in public opinion and forced to debate the issues. Complacency is thus avoided and political power becomes an instrument of social purpose and not an end in itself. In order for them to be effective, however, they need to

be informed by a broad overview, at any rate in assessing a year (or nine months) which ought to be seen in the perspective of change from one phase of political development that has come to an end and transition to another that is yet to take shape.

Expectations can be a spur to realistic action only if such a perspective is maintained. Lacking it, irresponsible populism takes over, incites desire, and failing to fulfil it, forces suspension of the whole political process, the inevitable consequence of populism based on unrestrained expectations.

The latest interplay of expectation and realization needs to be perceived by examining its genesis. The new upsurge in expectations was aroused through a storm at the hustings which swept away a long established political structure and put in its place, almost instantly, a new form of coalition-making for which neither the nation nor the new power-holders had been prepared. In the event, old standards continued to be applied, leading to inevitable impatience and anger on the part of people who, having always been in opposition, found greater satisfaction in raising petty revolts than in engaging in the long and arduous task of reconstruction.

This gave rise to an atmosphere of a free-for-all in which not only the press and the professional pundits were found to engage. Equally pronounced, occasionally rather loud and opinionated, were the statements, press briefings and 'hints' by individuals in the strange new coalition of puritans, plebians and *priya donnas* that constituted the new government and ruling party.

Interestingly, though a good deal of waste was written into such an interplay of power and perception, it also reflected a singularly Indian way of consensus-making in which all differences get expressed, distractions interject so often and, from a seemingly inchoate process, agreed understandings emerge. For, what is strange and surprising is not that the new coalition lacks cohesion and

coordination — only the wholly naive and 'idealistic' could expect such behaviour in such a short time from (even by Indian standards) such an unusual collection of people — but that it has worked together in the manner it has and produced an unusually open and wide-ranging debate on national issues.

The debate is still muted and inconclusive and is liable to be sidetracked by petty politicking and the design of vested interests determined to maintain the *status quo*. But it has nonetheless opened things up and is leading many of us to look deeper into the causes of our *malaise* as a nation, and to examine in some detail (and beyond generalities and dogmatic dichotomies like the Gandhian versus the Nehruvian model) the alternatives that lie before us if we are to overcome our shortfalls and seize the opportunities that even our imperfect course of development has bestowed on us.

We are still in the middle of this analytical phase which provides the intellectual backdrop of our transition as a policy. There is considerable lack of clarity in this debate, a lot of fuzziness and the usual failure to follow up analysis by specific policy recommendations. And yet we are in the midst of a fascinating process of regenerating our democratic consciousness. This alongside a certain mood of national introspection over even more basic questions on the yet unsettled terrain of the relationship between liberty and equality, the scope and limits of State power and the institutional framework most suited to the achievement of large scale change without undermining the integrity of the basic structure of democratic polity.

It is important to understand the nature of transition that the shift from Congress hegemony to the assumption of power by the Janata coalition represents. It is not a transition in the sense of a passing phase, a holding operation pending a change-over. It is, rather, a transition which is itself an instrument of change, an essential stage in national development

during which some major tasks have to be fulfilled, something called for by the accumulated perversion and inertia of the operating system which had gone astray in the hands of insensitive and irresponsible leaders, a necessary intervention in an attempt to move towards a remodelled system.

The remodelling is called forth not just to correct the distortions that had set in but also to deal with a new set of challenges and a new agenda of tasks and priorities. All dynamic societies go through such change every few decades. Continuities are still bound to be there but continuity *per se* has no meaning. Undoubtedly, those who are too used to the assumptions of the past or too deeply entrenched in existing structures are bound to feel unnerved by transitions towards a new order.

This is indeed the case with the present day apologists of the old order in India — Fabian style socialists, westernized modernists, nationalists and growth men — who see the ghost of reaction or disintegration or both in every move towards a somewhat different techno-economic structure or a decentralized polity. There are many in the Janata Party itself who suffer from such a disposition and are therefore prone to think of the 'next stage', even though most of the tasks facing the Janata transition are yet to be fulfilled.

It would be a serious mistake to apply old standards in evaluating either the form or the substantive arrangements through which the transition towards a reconstructed political and economic order is to be achieved. Janata is *not* another Congress Party (it is not a party in the ordinary sense of the term). Its writ does not run in the whole country. Its actions are highly circumscribed, both from outside its structure and from within — from the presence in it of men too used to old ways and too old to be able to think afresh alongside more dynamic people who combine a degree of commitment with political skill — but above all from the changed historical context and a new set of tasks that it is supposed

ed to fulfil. As mentioned above, it is not a transition in the sense of a stop-gap arrangement but one which is germane to the process of remodelling the 'system'.

What are these tasks? First and foremost is the task of recovering from the debris of the Emergency and the years leading towards it — years of destruction of the basic framework of the federal polity, democratic decision-making and a plural structure of power. The damage done by these years of centralized mismanagement and institutional erosion, leading to perpetration of public misdemeanors by those in power — all in the name of exercising legitimate authority and establishing the dignity of high office — has been far reaching. Undoing it will itself entail a great deal of firmness, sagacity and intellectual honesty on the part of those who may have later become 'victims' but who had over a long period of time allowed the system to be gradually eroded and ultimately undermined.

For this it will be necessary to not only undo the specific misdemeanors of the Emergency period and the subversion of the Constitution, but to also alter institutional arrangements and practices which have been allowed or overlooked for long but which led to arbitrary exercise of power and undermining of the democratic order.¹

Second, beyond changes in the overall institutional framework and measures to prevent the gross misuse of power (e.g., in regard to electoral and party finances, conduct of federal relations, restraints on executive power, and legal obligations of civil servants and the police), the transitional polity has to correct the distortions and im-

balances that have crept into the framework and content of public policy. This has largely been due to the undermining of the fine balance between governmental authority, economic performance and political participation during the last decade, but partly also due to some earlier mistakes in strategy, especially in the fields of economic planning, education and public administration.

The debate on economic policy that is under way is germane to this task. Similar debates are needed on the educational system, the organization of the federal system (which includes the territorial reorganization of the States and of districts within the States), the machinery of government and the relationship between the legislative and the administrative wings of government, and the division of functions and responsibilities between various authorities and between the State apparatus and the voluntary structure of society.

Third, and this follows from the second, there is need to think anew of the benefits and costs of extending the role of government in the management of various sectors of society, and of institutional means for limiting private financial power in influencing public affairs as well as for circumscribing the power of the bureaucracy in the name of safeguarding 'public interest'.

In the economic sphere there is need to evolve an approach to the questions of the relationship between the size and distribution of economic power and the organizational and technological options pertaining thereto. These issues need to be considered in the specific context of an economy of scarcity, an at once enormously heterogeneous and highly unequal society, and a demographic map that is largely rural and semi-urban — in short, in the context of the need for an alternative framework of public policy suited to indigenous needs, capacities, structural characteristics and values.

These issues are not academic any more. A few academics and opinion-makers have been raising them for a long time. Today with

a staggering rise in unemployment, poverty and degradation, and disparities and inequalities, these issues have shot to the centre of political consciousness and call for high level political decisions.

To no small extent, the 'system' that foundered in June 1975 was based on some false assumptions (alongside some valid ones). These were in regard to development strategy, the relationship between economic and political power that would have resulted from western-style industrialization in a highly underdeveloped and unequal society, the role of the peasantry in economic and political development, and the relevance and utility of 'traditional' industry and technology, if any, in the development process as compared to 'modern' and imported models. These assumptions have led to the present levels of economic destitution and disparities, the shift of power and influence to the educated urban middle classes, and what amounts to internal colonialism in large parts of the country.

The economic debate currently under way, based on the Janata Party's policy announcement, involves all these dimensions. It is not surprising that policy changes, meant to raise the employment and purchasing power of the people, lay greater emphasis on agriculture and rural development and move towards a more diversified structure of industrial growth. This means greater scope for smaller productive units and indigenous technology, proposals which have been attacked by journalists and academics as taking the country 'back' from the path of modernization and progress, as being against science and technology, and as a design to undermine central authority and national planning.

This is not surprising because those who are suspicious of, or feel uncomfortable with, these changes are essentially apologists of the old order which consisted of a woolly admixture of the Fabian variety of State socialism, modernization based on a negation of all traditions, nationalism based on a glorification of State power,

¹ The Shah Commission, that great laboratory and clinic where the actions of our elite from various professions are being laid bare, has shown us how, lacking institutional safeguards against abuse of power 'responsible' men indulged in not just unethical but blatantly illegal actions. It is necessary to engage in collective self-analysis, trace the real causes of such abuses, and alongside insisting on a new ethic of public affairs build a framework of institutional safeguards and stricter enforcement of public accountability.

and growthmanship based on the charisma of numbers.

Apart from being proponents of this ideological mixture, the critics of policy changes which are meant to take us towards a less centralized economic and political structure are also people who have acquired a vested interest in the present structure which gives disproportionate power to the large city-based administrative, economic and intellectual elite. They are a class unto themselves, shielding their interests behind an ideological smokescreen and crying wolf at every sign of the less sophisticated rural leadership raising its head.

This does not mean that the new Janata leadership will successfully implement a new set of policies so that the avowed goals of generating employment and purchasing power for the people, restructuring the industrial landscape in respect of size and location, and diminishing disparities between urban-rural areas and also within each of them, are realized. It could well happen that seemingly bold statements of policy (such as allocating 40 per cent of plan resources to the rural sector) may only strengthen entrenched rural interests instead of really reaching down to the needy and the deprived. Nor is there any guarantee that such a shift in relative priorities (between rural and urban and between types of industry) may not remain on paper.

Existing interests in the metropolitan centres might continue to get, and even increase, their share of national resources and, by pulling all the weight they have and their influence on the bureaucracy and on organs of public opinion, as well as on elements within the ruling party, paralyse the apparatus of government so that 'nothing moves'.

In order that the announced objectives are realized, it is necessary for intellectuals and publicists to point out to the Janata leadership the implications of their pronouncements. It should be brought home to them, for instance, that the growth of a small farm and small industry based economy necessitates reform in land relations, political decentral-

ization and an industrial policy that curbs luxury production and imposes restraints on the economic power of industrial, business and managerial elites.

Unless these structural and institutional concomitants of agricultural growth, 'integrated rural development' and employment oriented economic policy are simultaneously achieved, the Janata *elan* of an alternative model will not be achieved. It may well happen that the government will fail to curb both the already established vested interests represented by the urban middle classes, and the emergent vested interests in the rural sector.

Equally important is the need to press for redesigning the machinery of government and recruitment of new kinds of skills in it so that the most inert and conservative of all our institutions—the administrative structure—can be made into an instrument of real change.

It is necessary to press home these essential pre-requisites of a more equitable economy and a more decentralized polity. Criticism of public policy ought to be directed along these lines.² At the same time, we must welcome the broad policy profile announced by the new government and counter the propaganda of the apologists of the old order against it. For, the latter are out to discredit the whole effort and to use the symbolism of progress and modernization, national unity, 'socialism' and welfare of the poor masses to continue their dominance and the dominance of the class they represent.

They did this following the 1967 election and succeeded, through their support of the 1969 split in the Congress and egging Mrs. Gandhi (herself no believer in any ideology) on to an advocacy of populist radicalism, to remain in power and indeed concentrate power in their hands. It is not surprising that almost the same people have

now got organized into yet another Socialist Forum, aimed to prevent the country from moving away from the 'path' they had charted out earlier for it.

The fact that these well-meaning Fabians who turned into populist radicals and then into the precursors of the Emergency regime can still claim to represent the Left in the country, is a sad commentary on the crisis in which the Left finds itself. One would have thought that the Emergency ended the mystique of centralized politics and nationalized economics for the Left. People who once thought of democracy and decentralization as luxuries which a poor country cannot afford came closer to the truth once they saw the real outcome of continuous attacks on the democratic framework over several years in the name of progress and radicalism and 'alliance of Left and democratic forces'. They experienced in real life what the suspension of the democratic process really meant (especially for the Left and for the lower classes whose cause they had been rightly championing).

The Emergency experience proved to be a moment of truth for many in the Left and has led to the realization that (to put it in their own jargon) a democratic revolution was a necessary pre-condition of a true people's revolution. This has clearly happened to large sections of the Left, from CPI(M) and groups within CPI(ML) to a new genre of Marxist thinkers among independent intellectuals and some highly motivated groups in the younger generation who are fed up with the sophistry and hypocrisy of established Left rhetoric and are groping for a more authentic and more rooted form of radical political theory.

This search for a new Left identity has clearly left unaffected the former socialist, ex-communist and CPI collaborators of the pre-Emergency regime even though many of them have decried the developments during the Emergency, especially in its later stages (some of them had supported the Emergency when it began and for quite some time after that) and have

2 For a detailed analysis of the possibilities and pitfalls of the Janata party's policy announcements, see my 'Design for an Alternative', *Seminar*, 216, August 1977.

lately parted company with Mrs. Gandhi. What they refuse to admit is that it was during the pre-Emergency years when Mrs. Gandhi's government was enthusiastically supported by the CPI, its many camp-followers in the Congress and the administration, and a large band of Left and 'progressive' intellectuals that the institutional groundwork for an authoritarian regime was laid. This was later used by a fascist clique to let loose a reign of repression — nowadays described generously as being mere 'excesses' in the use of power.

And now once again the progressive collaborators of the earlier regime are preparing to launch a new 'socialist' offensive — in the name of Nehru, of science, of a modern industrial State. It is up to the leaders of Left opinion in the country to expose the phoney radicalism of groups like the Socialist Forum and the trends and thinking process they represent and to save the country from a recurrence of fascist progressivism. Leaders of such groups may not be conscious of such consequences of their action (as they were not earlier) but their brand of socialism is bound to strengthen authoritarian and fascist tendencies.

The challenge facing the democratic Left is, of course, far greater than merely exposing phoney radicals (who swear by the name of Nehru but who came very close to striking a death blow to the democratic fabric that he had left behind). They have to redefine the ideological orientation of the Left movement. What they face is nothing short of providing to this country a workable political framework in the form of a new kind of national coalition which will fill the void left behind by the disintegration of the Indian National Congress, engage in a relationship of critical cooperation with the Janata in effecting a major transition in both the content and the forms of the democratic system, and over the next five years, lay the foundation of a new and stable political party.

The year 1977 saw not only the beginning of the restoration of the political process (a task by no means over), it also witnessed a

process of political fragmentation which does not augur well for Indian democracy. The Congress Party, whose organization had been steadily eroded following the 1969 split and the emergence of centralized politics, suffered a more pervasive process of erosion and fragmentation during 1977. This happened, not just as a result of the March and June elections, but also, and even more, as a result of a protracted struggle for power — and around rival principles of leadership and organisational framework — within the national and State level leadership following these defeats.

In this struggle, the great organizational bulwarks of the Indian National Congress — and indeed of India's nation-building itself — such as the AICC, the PCCs and the 'High Command' were all divided and found to engage in practices and pronouncements that were downright opportunistic and irresponsible (the most perverse of these being the decision of the CWC to ask Congressmen not to assist the Shah Commission in its inquiry). There followed a sharp decline in the authority and credibility of the Congress, including among Congressmen who were found to openly defy party directives and feel deeply resentful at the conduct of the national leadership.

The prospect of disintegration of what was for decades an all-embracing and pervasive organization occupying a large part of the country's political space, was a direct consequence of the surrender of power and initiative over the years to one individual who then demanded supreme authority and got used to it. When such a leader was humbled by the people and lost control over the country, and faced open censure and possible indictment through the ordinary law of the land, she turned her fury inwards and sought supreme power from an organization whose only chance of survival lay in going ahead without her.

The consequence of such a drive for total power has been traumatic

for many Indians. The historic Congress Party, which had for decades given the Indian nation its dynamism and power and had been central to integrating its diverse mosaic into a single presence and identity, faced the prospect of a virtual break-up into a series of fragments and splinter groups.

In course of time, the Congress will perhaps re-emerge from the ruins in which Mrs. Gandhi will have left it. There is still a large reservoir of feeling and loyalty for it in the country, especially among ordinary folk, which could be utilized. But it will not any longer be the Congress that stood for certain values and identities and provided a living tradition that gave to Indian politics its peculiar authenticity. The virtual destruction of such an institution, for more than the 19 months of Emergency rule, is the strongest indictment of Mrs. Gandhi's lust for power and her son's vandalism against the nation whom both seemed to have treated as a family estate.

While the Congress faced a splintering prospect,³ the Janata continued to be an alliance of several splinters of the erstwhile Opposition. There is no danger to the disintegration of the Janata in the near future: the dictates of power, the conviction of leading figures like Morarji, Vajpayee and Charan Singh, the continuing threat posed by Mrs. Gandhi as the Indian Bonaparte, and above all the still unfinished task of liquidating the Emergency and its legacies are likely to maintain its unity despite its inchoate character and organisational morass. But while the various fragments of the Janata Party (or at any rate the major ones among them) are likely to stay in one organization, there

³ The much talked of 'vertical split' will be nothing like the 1969 split — the architect of that split was herself found to drag her feet — and will be more in the nature of splintering away from the parent organization which is likely to hold its own though in a truncated form. (This article goes to press in the second week of December and the final details of the break-up of the party are yet to come.)

is no chance of the Janata Party ever taking on the role that the Congress Party played for over fifty years.

On the other hand, the prospects of a system based on two major parties providing to the electorate alternative frameworks of leadership and policy, are not very bright either. Apart from the unsuitability of a 'two party system' to Indian social reality and its regional and national configuration in general, the fragmentation and splintering of the Congress is likely to decisively affect the structure and framework within which the Janata coalition will operate.

The alternatives facing Janata will be mainly two. It could enlarge its factional and regional canvas and induct important individuals and groups that happen to be at large into its coalitional framework; in short, become a dominant party though perhaps more openly coalitional than was the Congress. Or there could ensue a long drawn-out process of restructuring the political landscape in which some existing parties, breakaway groups from other parties and some wholly new groups and individuals may come together in a search for a more 'likeminded' formation with the accent on ideological and programmatic cohesion and a capacity for implementing a reasonable programme of economic development and institution-building.

The Janata leadership may be tempted to try the first alternative and this may work for some time. But it seems more likely than not that while the Janata government may still be in power at the Centre and in some of the States, it may be both unable to implement policies on a sustained basis and unable to prevent defection and disaffection. Both of these would lead to a search for a new kind of coalition of power.

It is in the light of this overall prospect of fragmentation, as well as of the archaic character of large sections of both Congress and Janata (the two processes are related), that the role of the democratic Left in the country lies. At the

moment it is no more than a widely scattered movement of people and ideas, located in a variety of parties as well as outside parties, as yet wholly unorganized and not even fully conscious of common values and approaches that are widely shared by people who also happen to have requisite political skills and popularity, still no more than a latent formation though not wholly without structure and a growing sense of common purpose.

To transform such a correspondence of ideas and interests into an organized movement and from that to a framework of power will not be an easy task. It will take both intellectual and political leadership, considerable self-confidence, a non-dogmatic approach, a sense of history and consummate political skill to bring about such a coalition of men and ideas. At the same time, there is no question that this is both an historic necessity and an increasingly felt need that is based on accumulated experience of the working of models, institutions and policies and on an increasing realism among a large variety of people hitherto belonging to different strands of ideological opinion.

It is realism born out of the succession of crises we have been through and the catharsis that these have generated. This has changed the climate of intellectual discourse and consideration of policy options and institutional alternatives. As the objective conditions become favourable for utilizing this change in intellectual perceptions, mutations in the political structure and in its ideological and regional layout will make it possible to move towards an alternative to both the Congress type of dominance and the Janata type of transitional formation.

Let me hasten to add, though, that crucial to such a movement towards a new model of coalition politics designed to bring both cohesion and sense of purpose and its effective implementation are two pre-requisites. One is the success of the transition initiated by the Janata Party and government. We have earlier spelt out the nature of this transition and the specific tasks before it and have underlined the

historic importance of such a transition to a new order.

Permanence is not a virtue in politics, success in playing the role assigned by history is. The Janata leadership should not only not resent the idea of its representing a transition from the ruins of one system to the resurgence of another. Rather, it should consciously accept this role and play it effectively over the next four years. Nor does the end of that period mean some kind of a terminal event. For, it is from the achievements of the Janata phase that the new crystallization of social democracy will emerge. And many of the present leaders, who are already found to be undergoing a change in outlook and even in basic ideas and perspectives, will play a leading role in the new structure that will emerge.

Implementation of a remodelled economic process designed to raise and redistribute economic opportunities, a decentralized political process designed to democratize and de-concentrate the exercise of power and decision-making, and a reconstructed regional political map will together produce a new framework of confrontations and accommodations from which should emerge, almost *sui generis*, a new structure and alignment of power when the next national elections are held. The Janata Party's historic role is to move towards a truly democratic polity that is at the same time an instrument of social change. In this lies both its transitional and its permanent contribution. Yet, it will still be a 'movement towards' something new, still retaining several features of the old system and preparing the ground for a new system. It will be the task of the new formation, which hopefully will take effect from 1982 on, to consummate the transition and give rise to a stable system.

This is one pre-requisite. The other is that various parties and groups in 'opposition' to the present government should also accept the necessity of such a transition towards a truly democratic polity and extend a hand of cooperation to the government. The Janata leadership and rank and file too should welcome

this and try to work together with a variety of political groupings, in power at various State and lower levels, in opposition at the national and lower levels, and outside the government and the party system.

The country has come through a long period of political erosion, stagnation and crisis, ending in a convulsion of the political process and disintegration of the erstwhile institutional framework. This has produced deep chasms in the structure of political allegiances. It has also, largely because of the Emergency and the involvement of a large number of people in it, produced deep feelings of distrust and alienation and given rise to a rather disturbed state of political communication.

It is necessary to bridge these chasms and, while firmly undoing the wrongs that were committed and punishing the guilty, also move towards a new working relationship among different actors so that the shadow of the past does not cast its spell for too long. For, the fact is that while the faulty should be brought to book and even some political scores settled,⁴ the real challenge facing both the new government and those out of it is to deal with urgent economic and social challenges. Overlooking this can only end in another disaster.

The need of the time is for all concerned with national affairs to accept what went wrong with our political system and its techno-economic base, both before and during the Emergency, and to engage in a process of national reconciliation. Only thus can the crucial transition represented by the Janata phase of Indian politics be engaged in, major initiatives undertaken, and the ground prepared for a new political and economic order a few years from now.

It is necessary to grasp the thrust of the argument presented above. It

is basically an argument to utilize the catharsis we have been through to engage in a process of reconstruction in which all important segments of the party system and the federal structure should think and work together so that urgent matters of economic and social change are not neglected any more and the people of this country who have waited patiently all these years get their due and feel a stake in the system.

The transition to the next phase of India's political development as argued above will not take place by talking of 'realignment' in the way elements in the Janata and the Congress have been talking (as if it was simply a process of 'like-minded people' cutting loose from existing structures and forming a new one). Such an approach would be irresponsible and would only lead to further fragmentation of the political structure. The approach outlined here is based on the assumption of evolving a workable transition to a new political order and a new coalition of power, through a process that emerges out of engaging in the tasks set out for the transition.

The need at the moment is to bring various parties and groups into a common framework of political involvement so that the changeover from the old to the new is found to be compatible as well as productive and worthwhile by all concerned. What we need is the equivalent of a 'national government' as was formed in other countries facing situations of crisis or stagnation like the one we are in, so that the attention of all segments is concentrated on the real tasks.

The precise institutional profile of shared power and common endeavour in our context can be worked out by discussion and negotiation between various parties. Once a method is evolved for such a sharing of power and responsibility and people get engaged in common tasks, the movement towards a new order and a new coalition of power that I have talked of in this article will become possible. It will arise from the dialectic of the transitional political process itself.

⁴ This is taking too long and causing exasperation in many quarters, and in many ways preventing people from settling down to their real jobs. It is also delaying restoration of normalcy in public life and an end to the politics of guilt and accusation.

Marxist presence

E, M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

THE most significant political development in India during the year 1977 was the March election to the Lok Sabha. Closely following it, elections to over a dozen State legislatures, too, took place.

The result of both these elections was the replacement of the Congress by the Janata Party at the Centre and by the Janata Party itself in several States, while in some States non-Congress, non-Janata governments came into existence. None of the States where elections were held in June returned the Congress to power.

For the first time in India after Independence, the Congress thus ceased to be the ruling party at the Centre as well as in the States. The 25-year old dream of the democratic movement that the Congress monopoly of power should end was realised.

This, however, signified not a mere change of government. Behind the change of government lies the fact that the political crisis which has been slowly overtaking the Congress

Party since the first general elections of 1952 but which it was able repeatedly to overcome temporarily, has now burst with disastrous results for the hitherto ruling party.

The electoral defeat of March not only threw the Congress out of power, but unleashed the forces of disruption and disintegration inside it. Those who had, during the Emergency period, helplessly suffered the indignities inflicted on them by the then Prime Minister and the coterie around her took up some courage and began to fight her. This naturally evoked resistance from the other side and the whole party was for a few days on the brink of a split. That, of course, has since been averted but tensions between the two contending groups still continue.

This is not an accident of history but the inevitable consequence of the glaring contrast between the expectations of the Indian people when they saw the Congress rulers assuming power on August 15, 1947 and the practical results of Congress

rule. The growing disillusionment of the people, the widening gulf between them and the leaders of the ruling party, made the latter less and less acceptable to the people at large and alienated them even from the ranks of their own party.

This process was of course stopped for the time being on several occasions when, as the leaders of the ruling party, they adopted new policies with a view to weaning the masses away from the opposition. That however could not prevent the slow but sure erosion of Congress authority among the people leading to the emergence of the first non-Congress government in a State (Kerala) in 1957, followed by the electoral defeat of 1967 when non-Congress governments were formed in several States.

Once again, the process was sought to be stopped for the time being by the new strategem of a shift to the Left (*Garibi Hatao*) adopted by the then Prime Minister. But, as in the case of similar stratagems adopted by her predecessors, this did not solve the problems that generated the crisis which deepened in the following years. It was in order to meet this situation, as is well known, that the Emergency was declared in 1975. That even this could not save the Congress regime but that, on the other hand, it hastened the process of its utter defeat at the polls and complete disintegration of the Congress Party — this is the meaning of the March and June elections.

It is, therefore, clear that what we saw in March and June 1977 was not the electoral defeat of a particular ruling party, but a complete fiasco of the policies being pursued by that party since it assumed power in 1947. It stands to reason, therefore, that any other political party which aspires to take the place of the Congress as the ruling party at the Centre and in the States would share the same fate as the Congress unless it made a complete break from the policies pursued by the Congress. The Janata Government during the last 8 months has shown that the replacement of one party by another in the seats of power is

no substitute for the change of policies.

It may, in this context, be recalled that the communists, the socialists and other radical forces in the country have been making a basic critique of the policies pursued by the Congress. They pointed out that the policies evolved by the Congress were calculated to develop capitalism in alliance with landlordism and in collaboration with foreign monopolies. The political, economic, social, educational and cultural — all aspects of Congress policy were subjected to sharp criticism from a fundamental angle, the angle of Marxism-Leninism — in order to show that behind such populist slogans of *Ram Rajya*, Co-operative Commonwealth, socialist pattern etc., lay the class reality of the capitalist path of development.

Out of this critique emerged the path of advance as envisaged by the Left or radical forces in the country — complete break with the foreign monopolists, liquidation of landlordism and distribution of landlords' land to the landless and rural poor without compensation, nationalisation of the key sectors of the economy etc., in the economic field. In the political field, the programme included full freedom of organisation and struggle, speech and the press, etc., for the working people and the parties of democratic opposition. It also demanded practical measures for the flowering of the language, literature and culture of all the linguistic-cultural groups in the country.

Such an approach to the national problems facing our people was, according to the radical forces, necessary if the country was to get out of the crisis created by the capitalist path of development adopted by the ruling Congress Party.

This naturally was not accepted not only by the Congress Party but those who opposed the Congress by from the Right. Even among those who opposed the Congress from the Left, there were reservations, vacillations and sometimes even betrayals. That was why the struggle against the capitalist path pursued by the Congress and the Right opposition parties became extremely complicated.

Some of the radical forces sometimes joined hands with the Congress, while some others sometimes took the line of friendship with, and support of, the Right opposition parties.

These complexities were visible also in the two great events of 1977 — the March election to the Lok Sabha and the June elections to several State legislatures. Let us recall that, as on several earlier occasions, so in the March and June elections, too, a section of the Left in the country was ranged against the opposition and with the Congress, while some others were to merge themselves into a single party with such opposition parties as the Jana Sangh, the BLD, and the Congress (O). The electoral defeat of the Congress meant also the defeat for the former.

For nearly a quarter of a century, one or other section within the Left movement had joined hands with the Congress.

The Socialist Party gave the lead in this respect when, in 1954, it joined hands with the Congress in Travancore-Cochin to prevent the formation of a non-Congress government and forming its own government which was virtually a prisoner in the hands of the Congress.

The line was subsequently taken up by a section within the then undivided Communist Party who gave the call for the formation of a 'national democratic front' including the Congress and the Communist Party which will lead to the formation of a coalition government. Going through a number of twists and turns, this line ultimately ended in the break-up of the undivided Communist Party and the newly formed Right Communist Party moving towards a coalition with the Congress in Kerala and collaborating with the Congress in establishing semi-fascist terror in West Bengal. Having tasted the fruits of such a coalition in Kerala, they subsequently gave the call for repeating Kerala in every State as well as at the Centre.

The March election of this year to the Lok Sabha was such a heavy

blow to this line of 'Congress-Communist unity and coalition government' that the Right C.P. leaders are today talking in terms of a new 'Left and democratic front fighting the Congress on the one side and the Janata Party on the other.' They have also started making claims that, even when allied to the Congress Party, they had in fact been fighting the notorious caucus or extra-constitutional centre of power in the Congress and in the government

We are at the moment not concerned whether this claim is correct. What is more important is that the Right C.P. leaders have been obliged to speak a different language, adopt different tactics, from what they had been doing since differences on the question of attitudes to the Congress broke out in the undivided Communist Party over two decades ago

Let us now turn briefly to the Socialists who, though in the beginning (in Travancore-Cochin in 1954) joined hands with the Congress, subsequently turned towards the Right opposition. There has, during the last decade and a half, been a policy of 'uniting all the anti Congress forces', culminating in the merger of their party into the Janata. How does their policy stand now in view of the formation of the Janata governments at the Centre and in several States?

Their policy has no doubt yielded result in that the Janata Party has become the ruling party. It however does not mean that the line of a radical party like theirs merging into another party in which the forces of the Right are occupying key positions has helped them (the socialists) to 'radicalise' the Janata Party. On the other hand, the continuance of the Janata government in a situation of acute economic and political crisis in the country is proving a liability.

Many of the policies adopted and announced by the Janata leaders are in fact a continuation of the very same class policies pursued by the Congress Party for 30 years. Even on the question of civil liberties and democratic rights on which

Janata distinguished itself from the Congress Party, it now appears that the Janata is following in the footsteps of its predecessor, as is shown by the mini-MISA in Madhya Pradesh and prohibitory orders issued in several working class centres. Some of the topmost leaders of the Janata Government themselves have been obliged to come out with forthright statements against some of these measures adopted by one or other Janata Government in the States, and sometimes the Central Government itself

The main point to be borne in mind is that, while the Janata Party and its government played a notable role in the struggle against and dismantling of the authoritarian regime of the former Prime Minister and the coterie around her and while the Janata is still capable of playing this role with all its limitations, its approach to the socio-economic questions is, with some variation to this or that side on some issues, the same as that of the Congress. The same path of developing the nation along capitalist lines without breaking the fetters put by landlordism and foreign monopolies is now being adopted by the new Janata government, as it had earlier been adopted by the Congress government. On political, administrative, social and cultural issues, too, no departure is made from the Congress path. In fact, in some respects, the Janata policy may even be said to make a slide-back from the Congress policy

It is in this context that the slogan of 'uniting all the left and democratic forces providing a third alternative to the Congress and the Janata' assumes importance. While the slogan is no doubt correct, it is necessary to have a closer look at the exact meaning and implications of this slogan. For, as in the case of several other slogans like restoring democracy, taking the country towards socialism, etc., the concept of Left and democratic unity too is interpreted in various ways by various political parties.

The first point to be noted is that the Left and democratic unity is directed against the path of capitalist development. The unity of Left

and democratic forces therefore should be directed at securing the elimination of foreign monopolies, landlords and Indian big business from the national economy

This means;

the take-over of all foreign concerns;

radical land reforms in the interests of the peasantry leading to the take-over and distribution of landlords' land among the landless and the poor in the rural areas;

break-up of the handful of big business houses who are dominating the economy and ruining the mass of the people including the medium and poor sections of the bourgeoisie,

full freedom for the working class and other sections of the toiling people to organise themselves and fight their class enemies, etc.

It is around such a programme of struggle against the vested interests that the unity of the Left and democratic forces is to be forged

Secondly, if the toiling people and the political parties who champion their cause are to be able to fight for the above programme of uniting the Left and democratic forces, they should have full freedom of speech, press, organisation and struggle. The curbs of the type imposed by the former Congress Government should all be removed and adequate guarantees created against their repetition. The working class and the political parties which fight for the working people cannot afford to deny themselves the valuable weapon of democracy with which to fight class enemies and rally all sections of the democratic movement in the struggle for uniting the Left and democratic forces.

Thirdly, this means that the Right C.P.'s approach of equating the Congress and the Janata Party has to be rejected. Though the two parties do, in the last analysis, represent the same bourgeois-land-

lord classes and have therefore to be treated on an equal footing *from the fundamental angle*, there is a vital difference between the two and that is this while the Congress carried on a vicious attack against the democratic rights of the people, the Janata fought against these attacks.

It is a matter of disgrace for a party which takes the names of Marx, Engels and Lenin, that it lauded the Congress Party's attacks against democracy as an 'anti-fascist crusade' while it denounced the fighters for democracy as 'fascists'. It is disgraceful for that party today, when the Congress has been exposed as authoritarian, that it still tries to defend the Congress by equating it with the Janata. Cooperation with the Janata to the extent to which, and so long as, it fights the authoritarianism of the Congress is and should be an inalienable part of the programme of building Left and democratic unity.

It may, in this context, be noted that the whole political scene in the country is in a state of flux. Inevitably, therefore, every political party, organisation, group and individual should be looked upon from two basic points of view firstly, whether they stand for the dismantling of the authoritarian machinery set up by the Congress regime and would defend the civil liberties and democratic rights of the people wherever they are under attack. The mini-MISA of Madhya Pradesh, its variant in Jammu and Kashmir, etc. should be fought

Secondly, the fight for the restoration, preservation and defence of civil liberties and democratic rights is not an abstract question, nor is it a question of interest only to the upper layers of society. It is intimately connected with the class struggle in which the toiling people are always engaged. It is of interest also to the political parties, organisations and groups which are wedded to a leftward shift in policies in order to facilitate the abandonment of the capitalist path in favour of a genuine people's democratic path which is the first pre-requisite for a

subsequent transition to socialism and communism

The CPI(M) proudly claims that it has been pursuing this policy and therefore has not hesitated to give its support to any bourgeois party, organisation or individual who, for whatever reason it might be, has adopted (even though temporarily) such a position on one or other issue as helps the advance of the Left and democratic movement.

It did, for instance, give its temporary and limited support to the Indira Congress when the undivided Congress Party got split and when the Indira group adopted such policies as nationalisation of banks, abolition of privy purses, etc. It supported the Indira Gandhi Government also when it engaged itself in the defence of the fighting people of Bangladesh.

As for the Right opposition parties such as the Jana Sangh and the Congress(O), the Party fought them when they sought to oppose the Congress on a rightist programme such as that of the Grand Alliance. It however did not hesitate to cooperate with them when they took up the cause of democracy and fought the slow but steady move towards Congress authoritarianism.

During and after the March elections to the Lok Sabha, the Party gave its support to the Janata in the interests of facilitating the struggle against Congress authoritarianism, while reserving to itself the right to criticise and even oppose such Janata policies as are against the interests of the common people and the nation as a whole.

Such a policy of independently mobilising the people for democracy and against authoritarianism, as well as for a leftward shift in the socio-economic policies of the government, is a concrete application to Indian conditions of the celebrated axiom of Marxism-Leninism that the party of the working class should not merge in, but cooperate with, any bourgeois or petty-bourgeois democratic party or organisation, it should, at the same time, use every avenue open to it to consolidate the working class and the working people generally into an independent revolutionary force.

The press

CHANCHAL SARKAR

FOR the Indian press the end of the Emergency has provided no *de profundis*, no rising out of the depths. Looking at the press as a whole the picture is one of a well-oiled swivel to a new situation, a situation not much different from what it was before June 1975.

This is a crushing disappointment. If our democratic society can, overnight, become unfree and if its press more or less stampedes to collaborate with authoritarian rulers, then the very credo of that press is covered with doubt. But, when political freedom is restored and again the same people rush anxiously to please the new rulers, then the fine words uttered about free speech and free thought seem a mockery. This is not rhetoric. One wishes it were. The Shah Commission hearings have revealed in fair detail how the leaders of the press responded to pressures. The story of the organisations of the press — IENS, AINEC and at least one of the federative unions is not much more edifying.

There were honourable exceptions, among smaller opinion journals particularly. It is good to name some of them — *Bhumiputra*, *Sadhana*, *Opinion*, *Mainstream*, *Seminar*, *Radical Humanist*, *Himmat*, *Freedom First*, *Liberation* and *Chintha* — a list that happily cuts across ideologies. Two from the bigger groups also fought back despite a tough economic squeeze and administrative harassment.

The readers had no doubt. So long as they were allowed to publish, the circulations of the little opinion journals shot up. This was the position when the elections were announced in January 1977 and the censorship regulations were temporarily rolled back. This brought to the readers as well as to journalists, a blessed sense of release. *The Indian*

Express and *The Statesman* couldn't print enough. Readers were willing to read anything and, as the election campaign gathered force, the papers were full of speeches and speeches. The public didn't mind because they'd been deprived so long. Jagjivan Ram's resignation was, of course, a huge bonanza not only to the Opposition but to the press and it made the most of it.

The crunch came after the euphoria of the election was over. Dipping into its box of tricks the press could produce nothing but the old formula of political hype. There was a spasm of investigative reporting, mainly dealing with the Indira Gandhi family and with Maruti. Col Anand's death provided another brief flutter. But they were all left half-cooked. The investigations were shallow, there were contradictions and inaccuracies and it seemed that they could remain so because the Gandhi family were not in a position, for the moment at least, to legally take on any comers.

Then, suddenly, the probe fever died down. Some newspapers had talked of having set up special cells for 'investigative reporting.' If so, nothing striking has emerged. The proof comes from the Shah Commission proceedings. The Shah investigators have no legal authority to make people speak. They have gone round persuading those with experience of the 'excesses' to tell them to the Commission staff, and if necessary, publicly to the Commission itself. Since this was public information publicly arrived at, there was nothing to prevent the press from having got it too. But no effort seems to have been made. Take a look at the Shah Commission's proceedings, then reckon how much of it was anticipated by the press or how much followed up.

The figuring will not come out to the press's credit

Consistently, the press seems to have pulled back from asking hard questions

Some 60 or 70 people died in jail during the Emergency. The jail conditions revealed were pretty frightful. Where was the enquiry?

Not only through V M Tarkunde's Committee, but from other sources, too, grave doubts have emerged about civil liberty questions including the treatment and trial facilities given to Naxalites. The Rajan case in Kerala was also obviously the tip of an iceberg. But the press has been fairly unperturbed.

Without the IB and RAW, it has been alleged, the terror and surveillance machines of the Emergency could not have been run. Where is the digging for information about those agencies and the pressing for parliamentary committees to enquire into them?

Who bungled in the premature rush to arrest Mrs Gandhi? Will the public wait until someone writes another 'telling it all' book? And till then must everyone take Charan Singh's version as the last word?

Will only the Shah Commission go into the imposition of the Emergency? Who were the people behind it? Why was it clamped down? Who were the people in authority that were by-passed? How long ago was it plotted and how were orders transmitted to the four corners of the country and yet kept secret? If the press had done some digging on this, then the Shah Commission might have benefitted because it could have gone beyond what the press turned up.

What has happened to people like the IAS man, Mangal Behari, who refused to allow public transport for political rallies and who was, quite simply, picked on to be broken?

We don't even have to go into real digging. The Emergency saw several historic cases and judgements

most of which were not allowed to be published. Couldn't the public expect their publication now? The ordinary reader will never have the opportunity or the contacts to get hold of the judgements. In any case, why should he have to labour to do so? Some of those judgements were solely in defence of the press.

Coming nearer, the Indian press seems to have accepted in toto that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir is fully justified in abolishing civil liberties in the State. Maybe the State has a case but won't the papers even examine it?

One way of pointing out the omissions of the press would be to take up a recent publication *The Janata (Peoples') Struggle*, a collection of documents relating to the period of the Emergency. There is in it an unpublished news dispatch from Patna, there is also a chapter on 'The Janata Newspapers.' Such unpublished dispatches ought to have been published when the Emergency went and the press should have taken an interest in such publications, overt and clandestine, during the 19 fateful months. But there was little of this.

From content, suppose we pass on to other aspects of newspaper production. Laziness still seems to rule in newspaper design, the selection of news-worthy items and even in headlines. Should an active newspaper take the easy way out of selecting a lead story by simply lifting a sentence from a speech by the Prime Minister or some other Minister ('All guilty persons will be dealt with firmly,' says Desai 'India's credibility has increased in world': Vajpayee) and let it go? This means that the paper hasn't done any work of its own.

Speaking of work, which mainly means digging, the books that have come out about the Emergency of varying quality though they are, have more new information than the press has been able to muster. If two young reporters of the *Patriot* were able to collect so much information about the Turkman Gate incident, then why couldn't the

newspapers, with their infinitely superior resources, do better?

All periods of authoritarianism throw up their time-servers, climbers and informers, from the ranks of the press as from every other group. Usually they are dealt with sharply. Experience showed this up in countries overrun by the Germans during World War II and then liberated. In our case, the press has done little or nothing to expose those from itself who hunted with the hounds and now mingle with the erstwhile hares. The press doesn't even take an interest in a post-Emergency happening like the dismissal from the Deccan Chronicle of A. Venkateshwar Rao, who was made to go because the Chief Minister of the State disliked his reporting and wanted him out. The only difference between this case and Kishore Kumar's during the Emergency is that there the jack-booted officials in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting wanted to pursue Kishore Kumar to the point of stopping his livelihood from every possible source in the public sector or private. The press hasn't cared to look after its own children.

The Indian press is a midget. According to the Fact Finding Committee on Newspaper Economics, the assets invested in the Indian press is around Rs 55 crores. By comparison, the assets of only one industrial house in India, the Birlas, adds up to over Rs 1100 crores. But even this minuscule organisation, the press, which reaches only 4% of the Indian population could be much more effective than it is if it accepted some principles of public accountability.

It is arrogant of any country's newspapers to say that they alone are their own best judges. But the other judges cannot be government officials. The Press Council's revival has been announced by the government but one hopes it will not be the old Council. That body had not accumulated the kind of prestige and sensitivity necessary.

But the Press Council would be only one of the organisations needed to underpin a free and democratic press in India. The ownership pattern must change. Producing a news-

paper must be accepted as being quite unlike producing terylene cloth, earth-moving equipment or dry-cell batteries. The obligations of newspaper owners must be quite distinct. And because they are distinct, the sale and purchase of a newspaper should not be as easy and amoral a transaction as selling a factory making fire-extinguishers or bicycles. What should such a regulatory body be? What steps should the press take to reorganise the editorial structure of newspapers to make them internally democratic? These are questions to which very few answers have been offered from India. In other continents, however, there are several experiments that could be studied.

The Intelligence Unit of *The Economist* produced some years ago a study on the economies of the British Press. In the course of it, the Unit said that a good many British papers were very secretive about their financial figures. This is exactly true of Indian papers, as the Fact Finding Committee on Newspaper Economics discovered. There is secretiveness even about the most open figures, meant for the public. Ought all this change—in ownership, in editorial structure, in financial candour—to have come about in one year, 1977? Of course not. But in the year that saw the lifting of the iron grille of dictatorship, there hasn't even been much thought or debate about them—much less action.

Rajinder Puri has made the point that the two Rewasa incidents of 1974 were virtually ignored by the 'national' press even though an effort was made to inform them. That example of 1974 can be capped by many others after March 1977.

When Sanjiva Reddy, the President, went to the USA for treatment in September there was a vital question—whether or not he needed to go. There could have been a lively debate about India's medical resources and if it did any good to Indian medicine to have our top-most figures flown to the West for treatment.

When the price of edible oil went up steeply this year, there was a

great deal of speculation on edible oil purchased abroad under licences issued for duty-free imports. The newspapers, though showing concern did not carry out any investigation into the scandal, into the oil trade or industry. The Government and the Minister were also handled gently.

Too often there is a skirting of subjects, be they power famine in North India, the rise in the price of land, or unemployment. There are too many broad sweeping judgments, such as that the Bhagwati Committee 'just touches the fringe of the problem (unemployment) and then has little to offer besides platitudes.'

The attention given to Mrs Gandhi since the Emergency by the press has aroused quite a lot of comment from readers. It all started very cautiously with, on September 19, *The Indian Express*, a paper which Mrs Gandhi tried to break, saying of her visit to Rae Bareilly, 'Indira braves bricks and gets wide acclaim.' The *Times of India* which had supported the Emergency and Mrs Gandhi fairly consistently said sedately 'Mrs Gandhi fails to win back Lucknow, Rae Bareilly.' The two reporters might have been describing two totally different occasions.

And so it went on till the drama of the arrest on October 3. Before that date and after, every possible detail about Mrs Gandhi's arrest and release was splashed over the pages. The old-school news person, amoral without perspective and not feeling the need of one, would consider it a juicy story and therefore worth giving in extenso. Interestingly enough, a lot of readers and listeners to AIR feel that Mrs Gandhi was being given undue publicity and was capitalizing on it to fight her way back. A most interesting media-values debate lies within this argument and counter argument. The crude fact, however, is that the news desks and editors of our newspapers did not ponder on the social consequences of their decision.

The International Film Festival at Bombay was indeed covered lavishly but there was little critical

appraisal of its preparations and organisation. There was no investigation of the kind of films that were invited or allowed in or into the fact whether India did not, in fact, employ a double standard about censorship.

There were positives also. In July, the *Times of India* carried a good series on oil and on the refinery closure for want of crude. The press also took up quite early the reported withdrawal of some history books by the Ministry of Education. But the striking positives in news or in campaigns were regrettably few in a year where the press, after being an eyesore and pet aversion of a repressive government, became a favourite of the people.

In all evaluation, of course, one is restricted by the fact that the Indian press publishes in about 20 languages and, except for the few languages that one knows, the study of performance is almost impossible. The go aheadness of Hindi people like *Nai Dunia* of Indore or *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta might well indeed be matched in a Telugu, Marathi or Malayalam paper but it would be difficult to detail without an elaborate machinery for evaluation.

In 1977 the Indian press has missed a great opportunity. For the first time after a good many years it had public support and approval behind it. The public knew the press had been harshly treated and was full of sympathy. The Janata Government, although it has formed no definite policy towards the press, has been unhesitating in saying that it must be free. To its credit one must also say that the government has not been hypersensitive to criticism.

Despite those advantages, the press, in 1977, hasn't notched up a year of new resolution or achievement. After 19 months of steady contemptuous repression, personal humiliations and whipping by censorship, the Indian press hasn't been able to produce much other than 'more of the same'. And this is why the returning apathy of other segments of society to the press and its problems is not surprising.

The fear of history

S GOPAL

OF all the social sciences, it is history which rouses the greatest interest in the minds of the politicians. There are various reasons for this. It has always had an inventive and purposive use. The line between history and mythology is thought to be thin, the past can be used to lend legitimacy to any aspect of the present and, especially in the years of resistance to imperialism, history could be utilized to strengthen the forces of cultural nationalism.

But, the use of history did not depart with the foreigner, though the nature of the problem changed. In the first place, the discipline of historical analysis has itself been transformed. In the last thirty years the study of the past has become scientific, and is as different from mythology as astronomy is from astrology and chemistry from alchemy. It goes without saying that history is not, and cannot hope to be, a science in the sense of experimentation and re-creation of the conditions which are being examined. No precise laws which can be checked are possible. But the study of history can be scientific in the sense of rational approaches and analyses and the careful and methodical scrutiny of source material. It has moved away from the projection of the historian's identity and from the search in the past for current aspirations, and is a specialized discipline with a recognized and verifiable methodology and the proper use of proper evidence. The historian, of course, is still aware of the present and on this basis formulates the questions which he poses to the past, but he would regard it as a betrayal of his task if he utilized his present requirements to secure the answers which he seeks from the past.

However, this in itself worries the politician who, even in a free coun-

try, hopes to utilize history in the interests of his ideology and, especially if the latter is retrograde and backward-looking, finds that scientific history is of no use to him. He would seem, indeed, to be even more than worried by the fact that the 'new' history is an obstinate discipline. Unlike the other social sciences, such as economics and sociology, which are, in a sense, reactive studies and seek to solve problems rather than be content with assessing them, history seems to stand apart, as a kind of judge, and the discipline is so deeply embedded in the popular consciousness that it cannot be ignored.

This explains why all totalitarian regimes seek to harness history in their support and have it rewritten according to their needs. Hitler secured the elimination of the Jewish element and contribution in the German past. An almost exact parallel with what is happening in India today happened in Germany in the early twentieth century. Gustav Kossinna argued for the primacy of German prehistory in a study published in 1912 where the German people were described as the most superior and the cradle of world civilisation. The 1941 edition quotes Hitler at length and Kossinna's chauvinism was a deliberate support of racism. Himmler used these arguments to back Nazi policy and stated that 'Prehistory is the doctrine of the emmence of the Germans at the dawn of civilisation'. Mussolini ordered the revision of Italian history to serve as a precedent for his own foreign policy. Historiography in the early phase of communist societies also distorts events and personalities on the ground that the new history represents the aspirations of a new class whose role has not been considered before. History to dictation

s a natural ally of authoritarianism.

There is, alongside this desire to exploit history, a widespread fear of scientific history. This is not peculiar to India. In recent months we have had in Britain, academic mugging of Marxist historians and in Greece invective poured on French scholars who dared to minimise the glory of ancient Athens. But what is novel and particularly alarming in our country is the manner in which non-historians have decided to intervene in what should, at best, be historiographical polemics amongst professionals. One can ignore presumptuous editors who publish in their dailies lists stating which historians should be given what jobs. But the situation becomes more serious when politicians, especially those in authority, decide to pronounce on purely academic matters.

The Janata Party has been swept into power primarily to safeguard civil liberties. Manifestly one of these liberties most to be cherished is the right of scholars to free thought, unimpeded research and the untrammelled expression of their conclusions. But this academic prerogative is the first to be challenged by the Janata Party, or at least a section of that party, the Jan Sangh and its ally, the R S S (members of which have publicly defended the move to ban certain books on history). The Janata government would appear to be providing official sanction to this assault, and, as was perhaps to be expected, the historian is the first of the social scientists to come under fire. Those among the economists, political scientists and other academics who publicly supported the Emergency have either clambered on to the new band-wagon or been forgotten; but even the historians who declined to support Mrs. Gandhi in her last two years of power have now to deal with fresh onslaughts both on themselves and, even more seriously, on their discipline.

The Prime Minister has been reported to have said, at a widely publicized function in the capital, that a particular type of approach to our national past is the 'correct' type of history. As this report in the press has not been denied, we

may take it that the Prime Minister did say this. The report raises many questions. There is, first of all, no such thing as 'correct' history. Information can be correct or incorrect but not history. There can only be views of the past, some of which approximate more clearly to the reality because of the evidence they draw upon and the quality of their logic and analysis.

Besides, while I have regard for Morarji Desai and respect for his achievements, I am not aware that he has any special qualifications for expressing a conclusive preference for a particular approach to history. I am sure that Morarji Desai would think many times before stepping forward, even in his newly acquired status as head of the government, to proclaim that Newtonian physics were superior to those of Einstein, it is odd then that he should venture into history, which is today as technical a branch of knowledge as physics.

It is said that on the same occasion, Dr. V K R V. Rao called upon the new government to translate the history of India, compiled by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, into all the Indian languages. Dr. Rao would rightly regard me as out of my mind if, in twenty years time, I, as an outworn academic and discarded careerist, ascended the platform to demand that the writings in economics of J C. Coyajee be translated into our fourteen languages. I wonder if our politicians realize that when they deliberately trespass into specialist fields of scholarship and seek to lay down the law, they are, in the minds of all thinking persons, making fools of themselves.

Even worse, for who is he whom the Prime Minister and Dr. Rao are commending? Dr. R C Majumdar, who even thirty years ago was twenty years out of date and writing, at length and in profusion, traditional, blinkered history. His only claim today to our esteem is that he is 91 years of age. His longevity has earned him the right to be preserved in cotton wool by either the Janata government or the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (at times

one feels that these days the Bhavan is becoming a part of the government).

But, all this would be merely laughable were there not lurking behind it a serious danger. For, Dr. Majumdar is the doyen of a Hindu chauvinist view of Indian history. He and his followers see the history of our country only in terms of the achievements of the Hindus, and any questioning of their analysis of the medieval period or of the national movement in terms of 'Hindu heroes' is said to reflect a pro-Muslim communalism. Obviously there were some events which were closely related to Hindu-Muslim relations and have to be analysed as such. Religion as a factor in historical explanation is not to be ignored; and the existence of religious tensions at various times and places cannot be underplayed. But no historian would today regard religion (or any other element for that matter) as the sole factor in explanation. To interpret the history of medieval India or to study Indian nationalism only in terms of Hindu-Muslim relations leads into the blind alley of limited explanations based on communalism of either the Hindu or the Muslim variety.

Modern Indian historiography has been influenced by the context in which it has developed and, with the changing context, has passed through various phases. Initially, the modern study of Indian history, in the period of Western imperialism, was dominated by British and European opinion as expressed through the interpretations of Orientalists, Indologists, Utilitarians, administrators, proclaimed imperialists and other camp-followers of the *raj*. The hang-over of this type of interpretation of Indian history is still to be found, with varying degrees of subtlety, in a few lingering academic pockets in Britain with some less subtle echoes among Indians.

But, in India itself, parallel with the evolution of the national movement and influenced by it, Indian historians began to question the European interpretation. This healthy development was gradually a victim of some distortion under the

pressures of cultural chauvinism and communal politics. With independence, these pressures lost much of their emotive force and Indian historians, in a sense, came into their own. They could adapt and apply the new methods of analysis which were increasingly coming into vogue in the world. They could question the prejudiced conclusions of imperialist historiography without succumbing to the narrowness of cultural nationalism or basking in its comfortable atrophy. They could do justice to the size and complexity of India and involve themselves in studies of its regional structures. But all this in itself has called forth the opposition of communal politicians who wish, for ideological reasons, to restore the outmoded and simplistic framework of cultural nationalism.

It would be bad enough if this group in the Janata Party was concerned only with fostering a species of unscientific history which was suited to its political activities. But in fact this group has mounted an offensive on independent practitioners of the discipline and thereby posed a threat to the foundations of our intellectual life. They have blundered into the position of assuming that historians who write as they will and with proficiency are in fact supporters of the former regime.

Take the episode of the time capsule. Mrs. Gandhi's government, for reasons best known to itself, decided to inter this capsule and to include in it, along with a very detailed list of personalities and a chronological catalogue of events, an assessment of the first twenty five years of free India written by a non-official historian. The whole idea of a time capsule is a nonsensical gimmick and no historian would take seriously either the idea of placing in it an interpretation (apart from a catalogue) of history or giving any such draft serious consideration. It is a commonplace that each historian has his own interpretation and no two historians agree. The new government has taken what can only be termed a ridiculous decision to spend as much time, effort and money in

lifting this capsule as had been spent in entombing it; and, in the bargain, seems to foist on one historian the responsibility for another historian's analysis. Nor is the rank and file of the Janata Party short of bumptious bounders who cannot comprehend the professional ethic that one historian will not revise the viewpoint of another.

There are, however, more important issues than the time capsule to worry about. Three text books, *Medieval India* by Romila Thapar, *Modern India* by Bipan Chandra and *Freedom Struggle* by Bipan Chandra, Amales Tripathi and Barun De are under attack. The first three have been published by the National Council for Educational Research and Training and the fourth by the National Book Trust, both organizations financed by the Ministry of Education; and the withdrawal of these books is being seriously considered on the suggestion, it is believed, of the Prime Minister. A fourth book, brought out by a private publisher, *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*, by Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, was being translated into some Indian languages by the Indian Council for Historical Research; and it is known that this project has also been put in abeyance.

It appears that these actions have been initiated on the basis of criticisms from anonymous sources. The academic level of the criticisms is so low as to rouse the suspicion that the motivation is more personal and ideological than scholarly. Those who have written in support of the criticisms have made such comments as to suggest that they have not even read the books in question.

Interestingly, three out of the five authors under attack are my colleagues at the Centre for Historical Studies in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, and this naturally rouses the thought that a concerted attack on the Centre, known from its inception for its independence and resistance to all forms of pressure, may be part of the strategy. It is paradoxical that a section of the Janata Party may be holding against

the Centre for Historical Studies the very fact that most of its members publicly demonstrated their opposition to the Emergency and signed the representation protesting against the 42nd amendment of the Constitution. If the objective is to give official recognition to one approach to our country's history and to suggest that this approach is superior to all others, obviously the first step in such a monstrous strategy would be to weaken those departments of history which are likely to take an independent intellectual position.

Whatever its academic inadequacies and its long-term dangers, as a political act the attack is shrewd, for it seeks to stir both Hindu sensitivity and liberal fears. Quite apart from the questions of interpretation and emphasis, historical facts which go against a 'Hindu' view of history are brushed aside. No note is taken of the recent world wide process which has seen a shift of interest in historical research from personalities to social and economic trends. The stress now is not on the roles and actions of individual rulers but on the wider context and background. Beneath the policies and day-to-day activities of men lie more significant, impersonal developments. So the interrelations between religious sects and the social and economic conditions of the time become more pertinent, and it is shallow to explain any phase of Indian history in terms of a single theme — that of the relationship between Hindus and Muslims.

Those who wish to remain on this simplistic level of explanation are deliberately narrowing the focus of their vision and ignoring both the research and the methodology of the last thirty years. The Centre for Historical Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University was started with the intent of taking these new trends in historical explanation into account and concentrating its attention on social and economic history. If, as part of this enthusiasm to block all new approaches to historical knowledge, this Centre be weakened, then we shall have in India only the occa-

sional topic on social and economic themes in the traditional syllabus of dynastic history and no major drive to develop new forms of research in the discipline. In other sciences, new knowledge is welcomed, in history it is feared and sought to be smothered. Obviously, in the long run, this cannot hope to succeed, but, in the process, a great amount of time would have been lost and considerable effort frustrated.

The specific flaws in the criticisms levelled at these text-books rise from this approach. If historical analysis were as easy as this, everyone can claim professional expertise and happily make authoritative pronouncements. For example, that Aurangzeb was a bigoted and communal Muslim is thought to be beyond dispute, and scholars who do not describe him as such are blamed for secular partisanship. It is not grasped that the honest historian has to come to terms with the fact that there are a number of documents of Aurangzeb's reign referring to cash and land endowments made by him to individual Brahmins and to Hindu temples.

Aurangzeb was obviously not a mere communalist but a careful manipulator of religious groups. So the problem spreads out from a narrow study of Aurangzeb's religious convictions and policies to a consideration of the politics, the economic necessities and the social environment of the various religious groups accepting patronage from Aurangzeb. In attempting such a broader consideration of the forces and patterns of that time, historians are not trying to promote Hindu-Muslim harmony for non-academic reasons. They are only, in line with current professional thinking on the subject, extending the framework of analysis.

The effort to denounce these text-books also aims at frightening people, who would otherwise instinctively take a liberal stand, by hinting both that these authors project the views of the former government and that these books are part of a widespread communist conspiracy to infiltrate educational institutions. There is no reason why

Mrs Gandhi's regime should be given gratuitously a monopoly of scientific historical writing, it certainly does not merit this gift.

Work was started on the three NCERT books in 1964 at the invitation of the then editorial board, consisting of Nilakantha Sastri, Muhammad Habib, Bisheshwar Prasad, B.P. Saxena and P C Gupta with Tara Chand as chairman. I took over the chairmanship in 1966 at the request of the then minister for education, M C Chagla, and the other members of the board were Nurul Hasan, Satish Chandra and Romila Thapar. All the three books were written and published by 1970, and the next year, when Nurul Hasan became minister and the board was reconstituted, I declined to continue as chairman and Romila Thapar gave up her membership.

These facts should indicate that the books had nothing to do with the Emergency. They also show that the books passed through a wide range of expertise, ensuring that the final text would be regarded as reliable by historians. Apart from the scrutiny provided by the two boards, the manuscripts were also sent to other historians for their comments and these were considered in detail by the authors and the editors, and the texts modified where necessary. Even after publication, when comments were received from scholars and educationists, changes were made in later editions. The purpose was to ensure that the text books did not express idiosyncratic or wholly subjective viewpoints but stated what might be termed a consensus of modern research and analysis.

For, the whole purpose of such text-books is to provide schools and colleges, which are aiming at high academic norms, with books which are regarded by professionals in that discipline as maintaining a respectable level of quality, incorporating the most recent trends of research and comprehensible to the age group for which they are intended.

The basic structure of a text-book in history should have stan-

dard material acceptable to historians. Text-books, which are after all the technical literature for teaching a particular subject, can only be written by experts, although their general comprehensibility can certainly be commented upon by other educationists. A proper text-book in history should not provide information to be memorized but indicate ways in which the past can be understood. It is therefore essential that historians involved in and familiar with on-going research and current methodology should be made responsible for the preparation of text-books.

Text-books at one level are a public issue, but at a more important level they are the responsibility of those professionally involved in the subject since the general intellectual level of work in the subject is dependent upon the quality of text-books used throughout the period of training. Not only teachers but the students themselves are interested in this, for the serious student today has a fuller awareness of intellectual requirements and makes greater demands on the academic framework of his life than his counterpart of an earlier generation.

Competition for a place in the sun adds to this. Today's student cannot be lobbed off with sub-standard knowledge masquerading under various guises. So the writing of text-books should not be left to those who are mere compilers of outdated and often incorrect information or money-rakers who are not historians but professional text-book writers. History text-books are not intended primarily to teach the child patriotism, loyalty, morality, mythology or whatever; they are meant to teach the child history. Such virtues can be taught through other, preferably extra-curricular, means.

The other allegation of communist infiltration can hardly be treated seriously. I have been attacked in Parliament by name from the Government benches as a supporter of communist causes. Marxist fellow-historians will no doubt squirm to find me placed, however involuntarily, in their midst.

The specific charge is that I had a share in recommending the purchase of the P.C. Joshi archive by the Jawaharlal Nehru University. This is an invaluable collection for the study of international communism since the first World-War, and very high bids were received for it from both Europe and the United States. Joshi himself gave priority to retaining these papers within India, although it meant financial loss, and I am proud of even the minor role I played in seeing to it that those papers were not lost to our country.

Such attacks are facilitated, and confusion in the public mind made easier, by the denunciation of the 'new' history as Marxist. It is, indeed, incredible how easily the bogey of communism is raised and what a wide multitude of thought and concept is covered at the popular level by the label of Marxism. A serious consideration of social and economic factors, which the scientific approach to history entails, is seen as the thin end of the Marxist wedge. The fact that some of the world's leading anti-Marxist historians are economic historians is clearly beyond the comprehension of these self-styled saviours of the discipline in our country.

This sense of insecurity is so acute that all trace of Marxist thought is sought to be wiped out. There is obviously no justification for a crude and vulgar Marxism of a populist variety, but of this even serious Marxists would be ashamed and they can be left to deal with it. But Marxism in itself is a major intellectual influence in the world and throwing a *cordon sanitaire* round the Indian mind is not the answer. We need to have a dialogue with Marxism and not to suppress it. Naive Marxism will have to be out-argued and not smothered by unbridled authoritarianism. Without some Indian scholars writing serious Marxist history, Indian historiography would be much the poorer. It is worth remembering that the richness of the French intellectual tradition of recent years in contrast even to the Anglo-Saxon one, is explicable to some extent by the

need to formulate an intellectual attitude to Marxism.

There must be many in the Janata Party, among both the leaders and rank-and-file, who are disconcerted by this whole string of events concerning history and historians, and the mental outlook which it denotes. Not merely are text-books denounced, but a book which has been privately published is recommended for withdrawal, and it is stated that the Prime Minister desires a review of similar books from a similar viewpoint. This leaves it open to the government to secure withdrawal on a large scale of books which do not meet with official approval.

There is in fact, underneath this whole controversy, a general principle involved, namely, the academic rights of the academic community. The government's actions and threats indicate a contempt for scholars. Withdrawal of serious, prepared literature is considered by ministers and bureaucrats on the basis of anonymous complaints without any explanation being offered or any known process being followed.

It has been said that a decision is pending. It is mystifying as to why the whole matter is being treated as being strictly confidential. To this day neither the authors nor the editorial board have been informed that their books have been criticized or what is the nature of the criticism. The Minister for Education has stated that some historians are examining these books but nothing has been disclosed as to who these historians are. Such secrecy suggests that the proposed withdrawal of these text-books is mere academic matter.

If text-books can be arbitrarily condemned and their withdrawal considered because they do not happen to suit the ideology of a particular political group within the ruling party, the same can happen to other publications, and one is well set on the road to the indiscriminate banning of all kinds of books. Freedom of expression is as much an issue as academic freedom in this whole affair. Independent thought is not a hang-up from the past but the life blood of a demo-

cratic society. It is frightening that one should even need to say this.

In developed countries, where universities have access to private affluence and research is supported to a considerable extent by non-official foundations, the academic community can keep away from government. This is not so in India, and scholars, academics and research workers are heavily dependent on official support for their employment, salaries and most other requirements for their work. This makes it all the more incumbent on our government to ensure that their control of the financial levers is not exploited to restrict the independence of the academic community and, what is even more reprehensible, to interfere with the processes of thought and the conclusions of research. So the issues raised by this attack on a few historical works are very wide and concern not only the authors of these books and other historians but all members of the academic community and indeed every person interested in the maintenance of civil liberties and in the free play of the mind.

Unimpressed by shabby authority and refusing to bow to social and economic pressures, the Indian academic community have, on the whole in recent years, a fairly commendable record; and no doubt they will resist this latest onslaught by a few Janata extremists till wiser counsels prevail in the Janata Party as a whole. There is certainly no possibility that the large majority of practising historians will surrender their understanding of their discipline. If history is to be a rational study of the past, historiography must break away from its own past. This has happened in India as elsewhere in the world, and there is no scope for retracing these steps. The new trends and insights in historical analysis transcend differences in politics and environment. The demarcation today is not between American and Soviet historians but between scientific historians in every country on the one hand and the old-type historians on the other. Of such scientific history our politicians, save those with a distorted outlook, have nothing to fear.

External 'continuities'

ROMESH THAPAR

WHEN the Janata Party was hoisted to power on the people's anger against the misuse of power by Indira Gandhi, her son, and her immediate political lieutenants, there was a great deal of speculation as to how this disparate group would carry through the foreign policy of calculated alignment and measured non-alignment inherited from the Congress Party. Those who are not in the habit of seeing policy creation in terms of personalities did suggest that the external posture of India was dictated by national interests and that a certain continuity should be expected. What was not expected was the extraordinary reinforcing of the policy of non-alignment by the Janata government.

The policy of *detente* with neighbours, one of the very positive elaborations in foreign policy pursued after the rise of Bangladesh, has seen considerable development. Cordiality has been restored in our relations with Bangladesh following

the significant Farakka agreements. Initiatives have been taken to restore some normality to the India-China dialogue over border issues. Contacts with Pakistan were extended despite the rather unsettled conditions prevailing there. Indeed, throughout the South-East Asian region, and among the States fringing the Indian Ocean, Indian diplomacy has become more energetic to press matters of urgent concern.

The relationship with the super powers of the USSR and the USA, a relationship which conditions our posture in other critical areas of the world, particularly in Europe and the Arab lands, has seen mutations of a kind and these should be taken note of in the interests of understanding the thrusts now building in the policies of India.

The rather special Soviet connection, deepened over the years by a considerable trade in military hardware, is sought to be balanced by greater frankness and more solid

assertiveness of an Indian point of view. Admittedly, initiatives of this sort can become bumptious when not supported by internal economic performance (which is the case at the moment!), but clearly much more equality had to be injected into the dialogue between Moscow and Delhi — and particularly after the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August, 1971

The correction of 'instant' anti-Americanism will prove tougher. The policies connected with nuclear non-proliferation and with Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean are terribly ramified. And there is the culture of the multi-national corporations, so powerfully embedded in US policy-making, which blunts a rigorous exchange between the two countries.

It is obvious to serious students of international diplomacy that the external policies of nations reflect points of consensus arrived at after prolonged cogitation and debate. Any diplomatic initiative which upsets the national consensus on foreign policy will have to be most carefully projected or else the total policy is thrown into confusion and controversy. Actually the Janata Party government has imbibed this lesson so thoroughly that it tends to drag its feet where it need not.

The lack of creative flexibility in our relations with the Arab States, despite the unwritten threat of oil blackmail, is a major illustration. The essentially mechanical viewing of Europe's potential role is another pointer, as also the refusal to assess fully the capacities of Japan. Satisfaction with 'continuities', whatever that may mean, is destructive of the influence that nations like India can mobilise on issues of vital international concern.

The Indian obsession with continuities, corrections, and categorisations is shared by a number of other nations who are active in the diplomacy of the non-aligned. One of the reasons why the non-aligned individually are unable to do more than repeat or decorate various international initiatives on reorganising the political and economic order is that collectively they do not

attempt break-throughs in ideas, concepts and action agendas.

The dangerous paralysis in the Arab-Israeli confrontation is certainly an area demanding the intervention of the non-aligned. Similarly, China's postures on neighbours calls for the healing touch. The sale of arms has to be halted or else nation after nation will be despoiled by the powerful, and yet not a voice is heard. And there are so many questions of wider concern: disarmament, global waste and the future of the oceans.

The non-aligned have been singularly bankrupt in pressing for consequential international action because individually they tend to wallow largely in their parochial situations forgetting the linkages with wider questions.

India cannot explain away its responsibilities as a leading member of the non-aligned nations. Apart from her continental status and strategic location, India is a bridge to many power complexes. It is possible for India to take unorthodox, and even unpopular initiatives, without too grave a risk of diplomatic disruption. The thrusting spirit which motivated India in the fifties has given way to a kind of quiet opportunism dressed up as consistency.

We are only deluding ourselves if we run away with the idea that our stratagems are not seen through. The post-Nehru leadership of the Congress indulged in continuities which had largely become flabby. The Bangladesh developments, and the *detentism* with neighbours which these made possible, opened the way to a revival of our thrusting spirit. It is to this challenge to which the Janata Party must link itself firmly. There are dividends to be garnered, both externally and internally.

The crises which are enveloping our world are now beyond economic dimensions. They embrace political and social structures. As the planet's swelling populations become concerned about their survival under the shadow of these crises, there is a reluctance to get sidetracked in ideological confrontations and violent solutions to conflicts. This mood has a powerful bearing

on the war games which the super powers play, it is an inhibiting, and therefore healthy, influence. In this way, *detentism* has now become an accepted gambit in the calculations of Washington and Moscow, and in turn provides considerable opportunity for manoeuvre even within the immediate entourage of the super powers. Witness East and West Europe today.

Reinforcing the *detentist* sentiment in the narrowing camps of the super powers is the new reality in Asia, where super power interference has been heavily punished in Vietnam and elsewhere. Add this to the sentiment of more unified European thinking, and it soon becomes apparent that the Arab and African lands are the only regions left for super power rivalries which willy nilly involve lesser partners.

Whatever the play of power in Africa, the tribal situations are too tentative and uncertain to provide a solid or sustained presence of one or the other super power. The recent history of Ethiopia and Somalia is indicative of what is likely in Africa. But the Arab lands invite the kind of attention which can destroy or give birth to new combinations of States.

Of course, Lebanon comes to mind. How easily it was smashed by the skilful fanning of Arab rivalries and the feudal fear of the political momentums that a successful Palestine Liberation Organisation would release. To permit these Arab faction fights to persist, and to heed to the war hysteria sparked by Arab and Israeli, is to invite super power interventions and involvements, direct and not so direct, arrogant and subtle, short term and long-term. If Lebanon has been shattered, what is there to prevent another shattering? Who is next?

Thoughtful observers ask this question repeatedly. West Asia is no wasteland. It has oil, and small elites control it. Western civilisation, as we know it, is still totally dependent on the energy source that oil from the Islamic world provides. Vast fortunes, which boggle the imagination, move this way and that

way. Western diplomacy is enmeshed in these games.

It is against this background that President Sadaat of Egypt visits Israel on a mission to salvage the future. His courage is so obvious that it does not need comment. But what of policy-makers throughout the world who, at this critical juncture, want to play it safe. What of the non-aligned and their progressive pretensions?

India belongs to the category of the silent. It is not suggested that sides should have been taken, that propagandist statements should have been issued. The best diplomacy is silent, but that is quite different from the silence we are talking about. India could, for example, have moved intelligently to persuade the Soviet Union to keep an open mind on Sadaat's moves. We were found wanting?

What of the other non-aligned? Some were positively belligerent. Others silent — or so, at least, it appears. Clearly, the crisis of West Asia is not fully understood in the context of the future of the world. This explains the narrow diplomatic view adopted by India and other leading non-aligned nations. Yes, we have reached a point where we are even frightened to offer our good services.

There are so many areas of current concern. The neutron bomb, a destroyer only of human beings, can open the way to another crazy armaments race with all its tensions, alarms and experimentations. The moronic desire on the part of the military thinkers belonging to the USA and the USSR to persist with the hunt for bases when they can already touch every corner of our world with missiles of mass destruction may seem stupid, but it is a very alive threat and has to be confronted, particularly by those whose territories are to be used for these games. South Africa and Rhodesia remain areas which can ignite by their racial arrogance a continental conflagration. Multinational operations in the continent of South America not only distort normal development there, but also vitiate

the *detentist* sentiment elsewhere in the world.

In other words, at the present juncture in our affairs, foreign policy planners in the countries of the so-called Third World cannot rest content with obvious and cliché responses to problems which are not of direct concern to them. When India expends her energy on *detentism* along her borders, we are only too enthusiastic, but we cannot help emphasising that limited *detentism* is not possible in a world that is too closely knit.

A full-blown rapprochement with Bangladesh affects the permutations and combinations of China seeking some kind of entry into the Indian Ocean. A border settlement with Peking disturbs the Soviet view of an Indian counter force in Southern Asia to the belligerence of China. Dialogues with Pakistan, no matter how sincere and determined, will run into the shadowy presence of the Saudis and Iranians who are today very much involved in various machinations on the sub-continent.

What appear to be essentially local regional issues are inexorably linked to wider international power equations. Do we operate at a multi-dimensional level? If we do, the impression is certainly contrary.

The battle on wider issues like the new economic and international order demand from India much more than the repetition of anti-colonial and anti-capitalist sentiment which has become a casual pastime for the corrupt elites of the third world. The charge that these elites are only interested in a kind of radical play-acting which does not in any way disturb or alter their privileged positions is terribly close to the truth. This is not to suggest that the battle for a just world order is not to be waged. But we have increasingly to inject into our thinking on these matters a thrust for social restructuring which has been absent until now.

Within the third world, the elaboration of Indian responses along these lines would help isolate those elements in advanced societies who are able to pour scorn on the sentiments of the double-talking

spokesmen of the third world. This would be no mean achievement.

One searches in vain for some such consciousness among the policy-makers at the Foreign Offices. How is it to crystallise with 'professionals' made in the image of orthodox diplomacy and far removed from the raw realities of India and the third world. It is far-fetched to expect such cadres to transform themselves without pushing and prodding by an enlightened and wide-awake political leadership. This, alas, is also surely lacking.

Embassies and diplomats continue to be seen by the politician as good fellows — or bad! — on the basis of their availability for odd jobs during those frequent foreign visits whose sole purpose seems to be some kind of official tourism. The serious diplomat, who is not a captive of the social crawl or a servitor, is a rare commodity — in fact, an oddity. This picture is not exaggerated. The culture of our Foreign Office needs serious and fundamental remedial therapy.

There is no better way to begin the therapy than to concentrate the attention of the foreign policy planners to the problems of the *detente* on our sub-continent. Thinking on the subject is patchy and no comprehensive scenario has been worked out. How else can we explain the persistent hunt for 'deep penetration' aircraft by the IAF and the quiet acceptance by the IN of ships which are by all accounts outdated. These expansions of air and naval strength, together with the maintenance of enormous army strength despite political changes on the sub-continent, cannot in any way be rationalised in terms of *detentism*.

The lack of a full-blown scenario on the decision to detonate a nuclear device at Pokaran in May, 1974 is still slurred over in the Foreign Office despite the fact that this act of exhibitionism has yielded no positive gains for India. Indeed, the switching on and off of nuclear capability only serves to spur similar activities in neighbouring countries at a time when we do not really have a policy. A *detentist* policy for the sub-continent should compel closer attention to

the totality of challenges and responses.

We speak of *detentism* as if only Pakistan and Bangladesh are part of the calculation. A nuclear China, even if it agrees to a demarcation of accepted or negotiated boundaries on the ground, is part of a wider confrontation between the powers. Does India intend to disarm in the context of the *detente*, or maintain a position of strength even though withdrawing its vigil on the Himalayan heights? Will such a posture of strength *vis-a-vis* China be conducive to a *detente* with Pakistan, or, for that matter, Bangladesh? We haven't even stuck our teeth into these problems. Listening to our politicians, of both Janata and Congress, you would think that we only need a few smart guys to win our diplomatic triumphs.

Let us go further into these problems on our sub-continent. Are we aware of the destructive dimensions of the crisis through which Pakistan is passing. Have the dreams of the army of Ayub and Yahya around a monolithic State done irreparable damage to the possibility of finding an authentic federal structure for what remains of Pakistan? Can this army, shorn of its traditional leadership drawn from a very politicalised landed gentry, claim to rule the Pakistan of today in the old style? Are we witnessing the beginnings of a break-up which only a new and inspired political leadership can prevent? What role are Pakistan's neighbours planning for themselves, and that goes for the Saudis who have a finger in every Islamic pie? Why is India so silent a spectator? Should we not be working in thought and deed to help Pakistan stabilise? Yes, it's a strange role for Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but he cannot get out of it no matter how hard he side-steps — that is, if the interests of the sub-continent override his parochial ambitions.

And when we turn our attention eastwards, endless scenarios present themselves on Bangladesh. In this region, where the powers dabble in the festering economy of a newly-

risen State, the crises of many tribal areas converge from India, Burma and Chinese Tibet. The Farakka agreements cannot build the defences against massive disruption in this strategic point in South Asia. India is the most affected, but the concern of her political leadership seems confined to rather peripheral and superficial aspects of the relationship with Bangladesh. We have become terribly fascinated by single dimensional attitudes to complex situations.

In the South, too, we view Sri Lanka and the future of a number of island States in simplistic terms — and this despite the considerable education we have been given in the politics of the Indian Ocean, particularly with regard to super power bases like Diego Garcia. Uncertainties in the region about security, economic backing and regular consultation on matters effecting the future of this strategic passageway of trade and commerce, are vital elements of a situation that has yet to evolve. It is for India to take steps to structure a policy without seeking overlordship. Neglect of the specific needs of the area or policy formulation only in terms of Indian compulsions will fracture natural solidarities and open the region to all manner of international intrigue. We are as yet very far from a coherent approach.

A concentration on these immediate tasks, uncovering all the inter-connections between the problems of the *detente* on the sub continent, is the surest way of evolving a sovereign foreign policy which impacts thinking in the chancelleries of the world. To go on reacting from issue to issue, as we do now, is to invite quiet contempt, and, later, open ridicule. If we recall the fifties, and India's dynamic role in those tempestuous days as the articulator of the hopes of freedom movements everywhere, and then think of today, the lesson is clear. Admittedly, the complexities and subtleties of the international situation have increased but the real trouble is that courage and commitment are lacking. We are wandering without purpose or perspective.

Gandhiji stages a come-back?

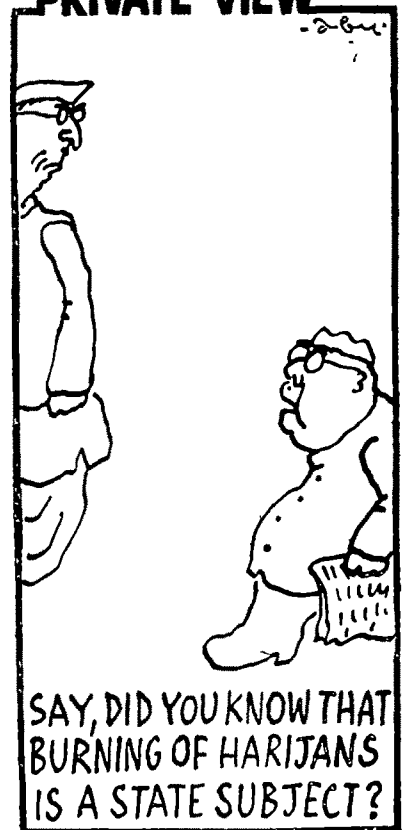
ABU ABRAHAM

OUR unpolitical correspondent writes:

There has been speculation in the Capital as to the chances of Gandhiji staging a come-back. Though present indications are somewhat confusing, since politicians have a way of creating Gandhiji in their own image, there have been a few marked trends. One is that a well-planned campaign has been started to prove that Jawaharlal Nehru was not a Gandhian, but only a westernised urban intellectual (like you and me). This denigration of Nehru by leading members of the ruling party is seen by observers as a move to bring in Gandhiji by the backdoor, though there are some who believe that he is being brought in by the front door.

Influential members of the Gandhiji lobby in the Janata Party are of the view that while Nehru was Gandhiji's chosen successor, he had little understanding of what Gandhism meant. For instance, as the Minister for Population and Platitude recently stated, Nehru gave us a rose when the people asked for food. Or, as another leading theore-

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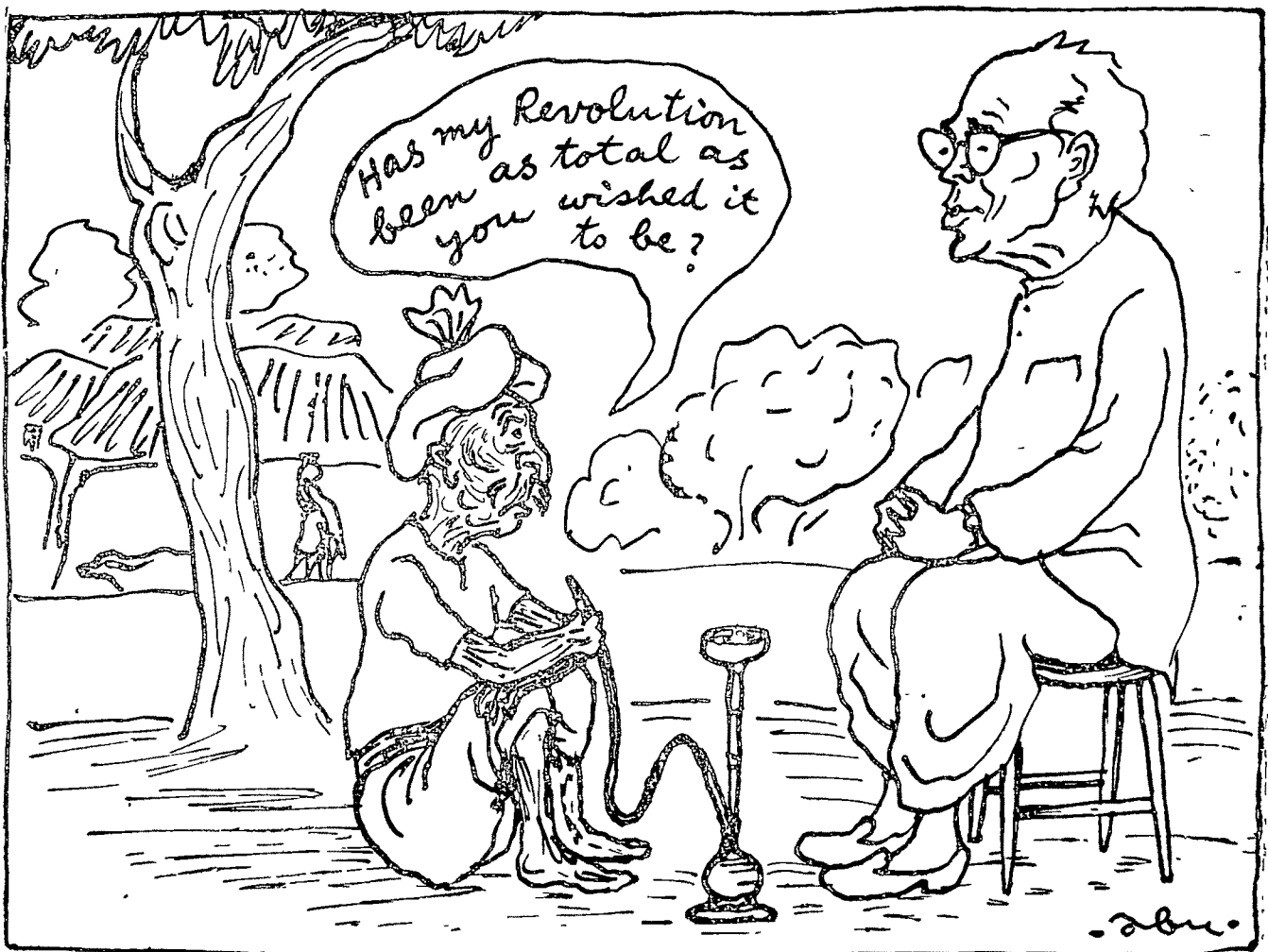


tician of the party remarked wittily, 'People can't eat steel.' A variation of this sentiment was expressed later by the Population and Platitude minister when he asked, 'Why do we need steel mills when we have enough blacksmiths in the country?' These sources point out that if his present policy on population continues, by the year 2,000 the number of blacksmiths will have doubled, and we shall be self-sufficient in smithies. According to the minister, smithological development in India has been remarkable in the last nine months, though he agreed with the Minister

for Mines and Multinationals that complete smithological self-sufficiency cannot be achieved overnight, the multinationals being what they are.

Meanwhile, a group of leading intellectuals have initiated a move to make our industries (and life in general) labour-oriented. They have in recent statements deplored the spread of detergents and motorised vehicles. Detergents, it is argued, will cause unemployment among the dhobis, the vast majority of whom live in the villages and also live

below the washing line. The instant-whitening of brown dhotis, particularly in U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan, they claim, is bound to have a detrimental effect on the traditional rural way of life. If we are to follow the right priorities, the leader of the group has said, what the country needs is not steel but more slabs of stone. Claiming that he was not against science, he suggested that our scientists should do research to improve the efficiency of our washing stones. This he said, will also provide additional work for



22.3.77

PRIVATE VIEW



AS IN INDUSTRY, PROHIBITION
TOO WILL HAVE A PUBLIC
SECTOR AND A PRIVATE SECTOR

stone-cutters as well as weavers, as the life of shirts and dhotis diminishes progressively.

On the subject of motorised vehicles, it is suggested that while every encouragement should be given to traditional rickshaws, the interests of labour-intensiveness will be best served by the promotion of palanquins. If enough palanquins cannot be produced indigenously, we should collaborate with foreign companies to produce them in sufficient numbers.

The supporters of Gandhiji claim that they have collected more signatures than the supporters of Nehru. They also point out that since the supporters of Nehru are chiefly westernised urban intellectuals their views should not be given the same weightage as those of the Gandhians, ninety per cent of whom drive past villages during the weekends. They claim the powerful support of the Minister for Probes and Probity and the Minister for Prohibition and Procrastination.

There is no doubt that Gandhiji still has a charisma among the common people, especially in the rural areas, where they are willing to forgive the excesses of some of his supporters. But there is a general fear among the masses that his supporters might rehabilitate themselves and repeat the mistakes done in his name in the past.

Gandhiji has been known to be concerned in recent months about the atrocities committed on the scheduled castes, whom he had affectionately called the children of God or Harijans. Any further atrocities will only improve his chances of making a comeback. While some of his supporters are of the view that the Harijans are themselves to blame for the atrocities, since they have in recent years been acting hastily to achieve their basic rights, Gandhiji himself is said to be of the view that only through collective non-violent action on the part of the Harijans can we achieve a democratic society. One of Gandhiji's most faithful supporters has suggested that Harijans should give up eating meat to remove untouchability. The proposal is likely to add to the strength of the Harijan community as more and more meat-eaters will be classed as untouchables. Thus, as one observer put it, Gandhiji seems poised to come back on a wave of meat-eating.

The recent statement of the Minister for Prohibition and Procrastination that complete abstinence will be achieved in the country in four years has given encouragement to certain sections of the poor who see in it an opportunity to increase their standard of living. The rapid improvement in the distillation system will bring about a transformation in the rural areas as well as in the urban slums.

There are, however, some Gandhian supporters who feel that the time is not opportune for Gandhiji to come back now. Another section believes that whether or not the time is ripe, Gandhiji is likely to be too busy turning in his *samadi* to undertake such an adventure at the present juncture.

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Requisition
move
dropped



WHO KNOWS? CHARAN
SINGH MAY ONCE AGAIN
STAGE HER COME-BACK

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Press curbs	The prevention of publication of Objectionable Matter Act, 1976
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The Fortieth-Amendment	Text of the Constitution 40th Amendment Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha, 1975
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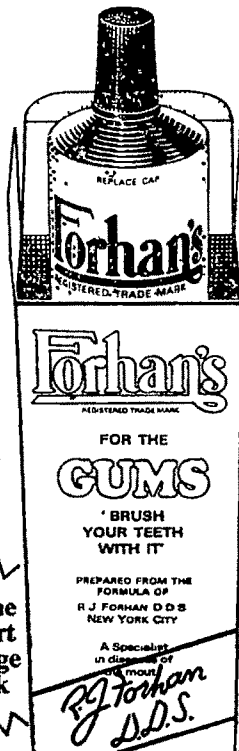
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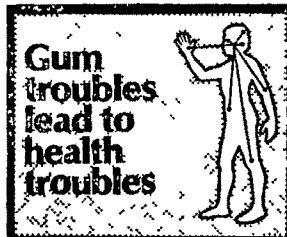


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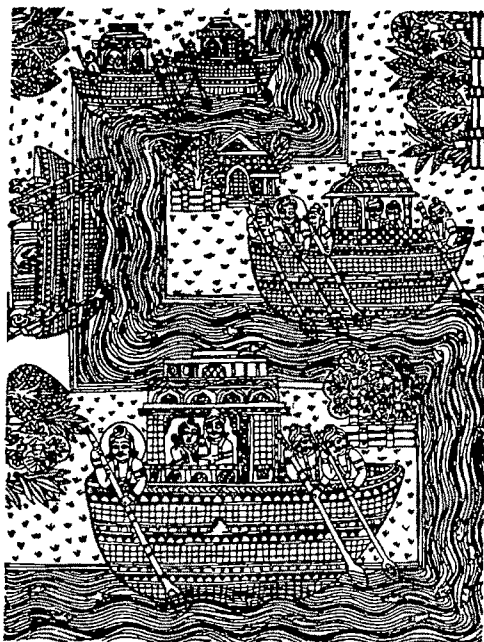
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pened that the traders of the
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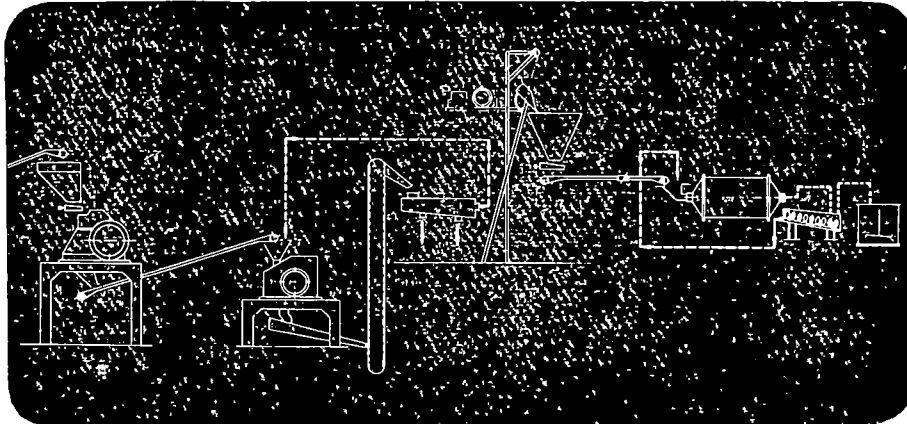


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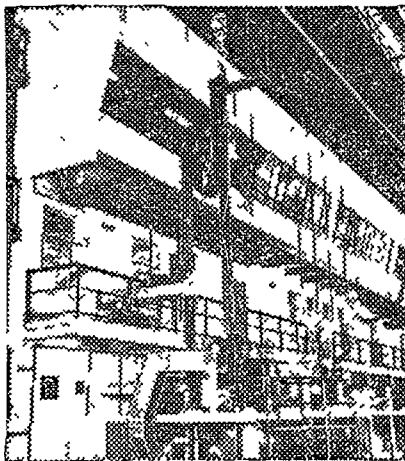
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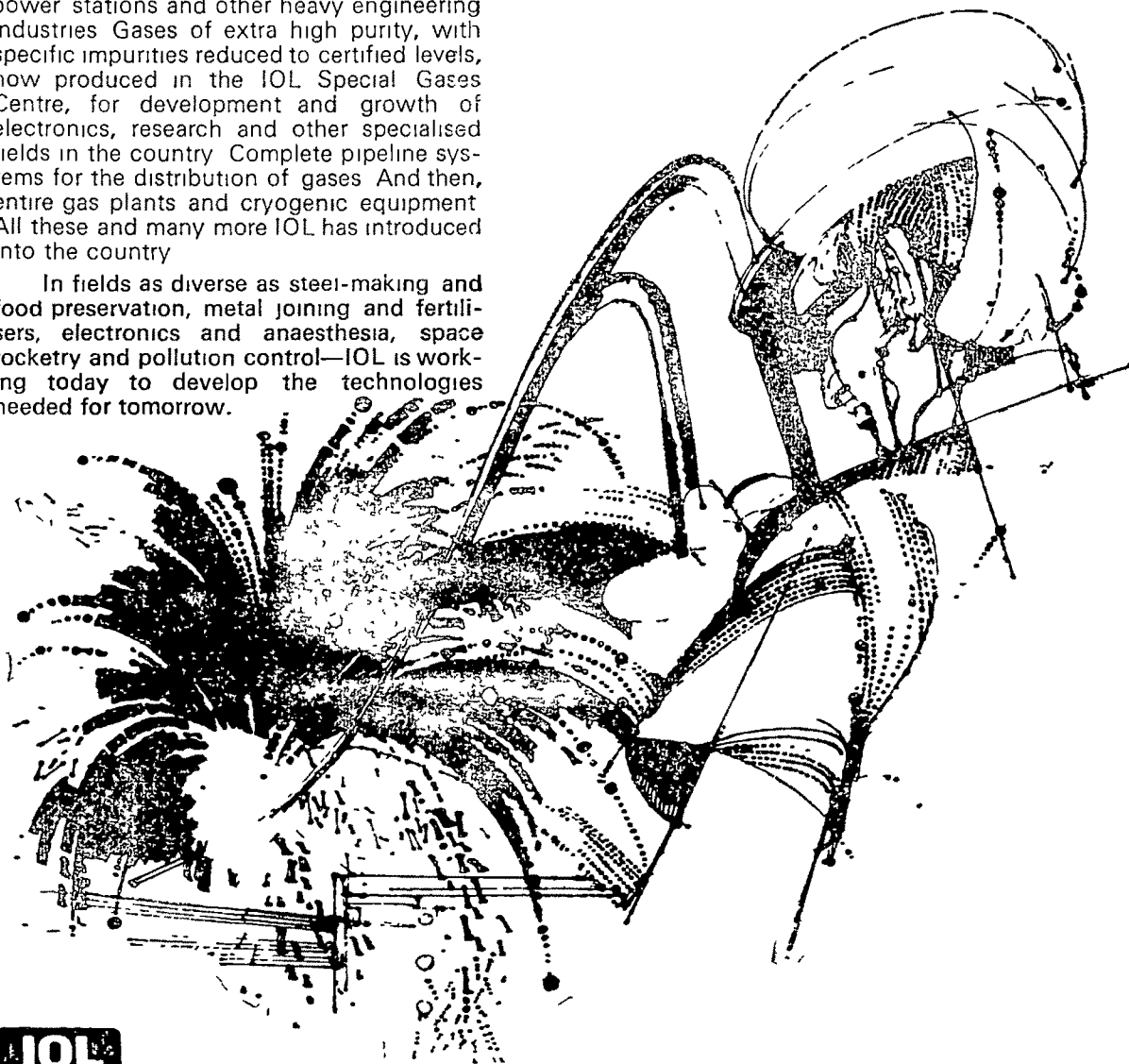
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IOC 2168

THE RIGHT PRESCRIPTION

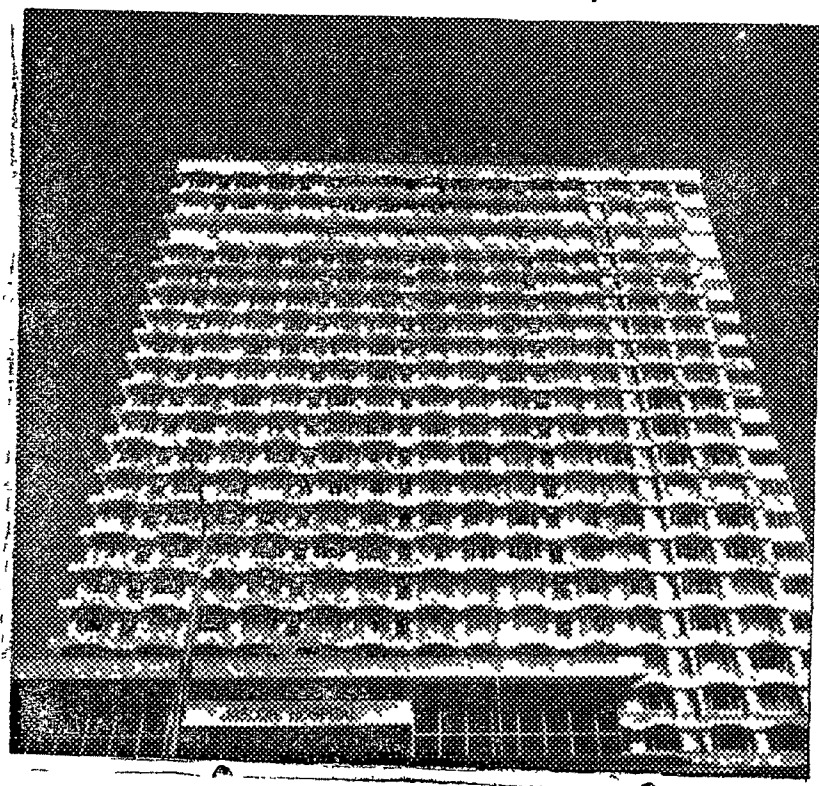
The Jaslok Hospital, the biggest and most reputed in India, has rightly prescribed Formica decorative laminates for its interior decor. White laminates with special aseptic and hygienic qualities. On doors, desk tops, bed-steads and the walls of the intensive care unit. For an atmosphere of quiet, clinical tranquility. A restful environment.

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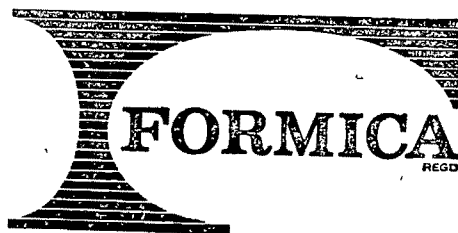
Formica India offers a range and variety of decorative laminates. And don't stop at catalogue designs. They provide unique services :
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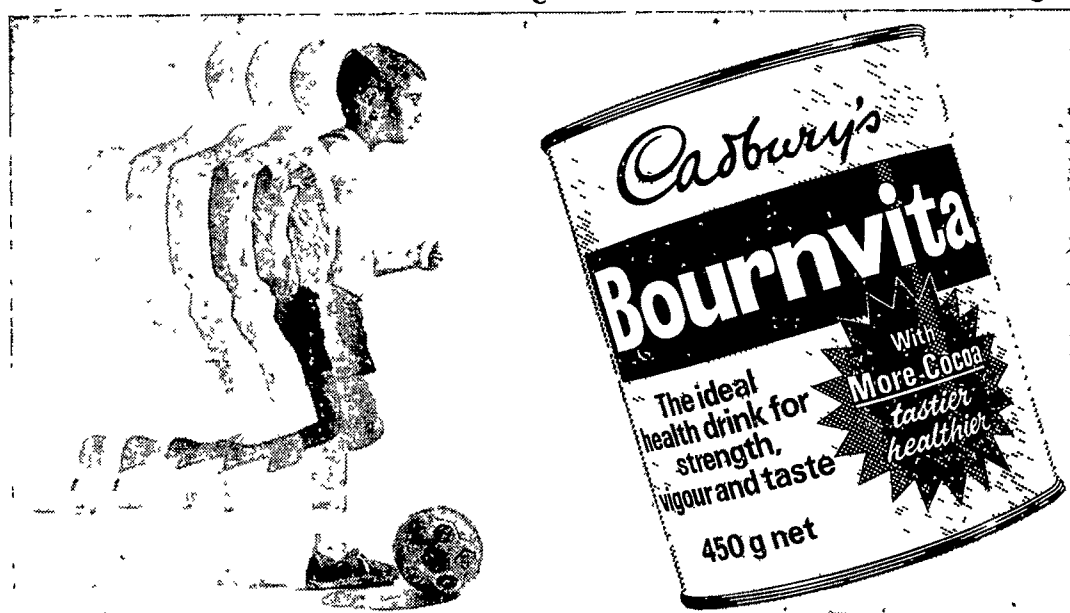
Total Fertilizer Technology

Backed by its intensive Research & Development efforts FCI has now developed its own know-how, design and engineering capability and can execute six to eight modern fertilizer plants at a time from the blueprint to the final commissioning stage.

Marketing Set-up

With a vast network of sales outlets and active promotional measures, FCI now serves farmers in most parts of the country.

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the FETLARC process for metal removal

In every sphere feasible, the country today is taking to advanced industrial production techniques for a faster economic development.

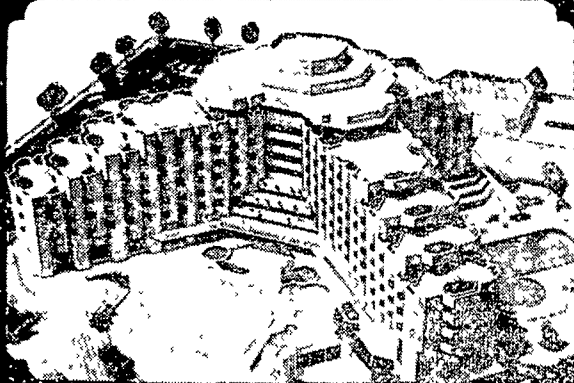
Helping the country in this direction in a big little way is Union Carbide India. By successfully bringing forth new industrial techniques and innovations. Like the FETLARC process of metal removal for instance. A unique process developed indigenously, it's proving to be a boon for any industry that has anything to do with metal shaping, particularly the basic industries like steel and foundry.

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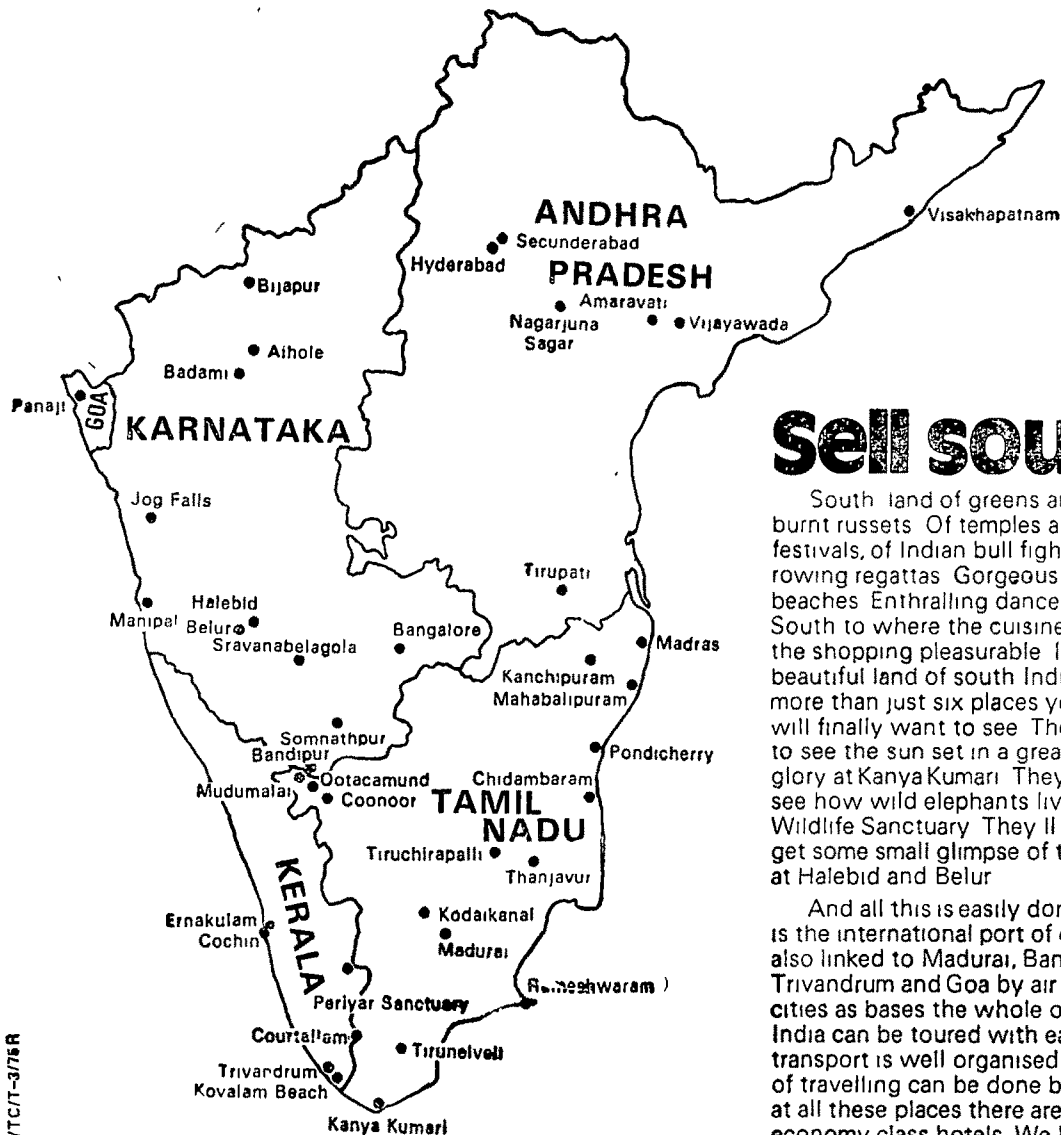


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Department of Tourism
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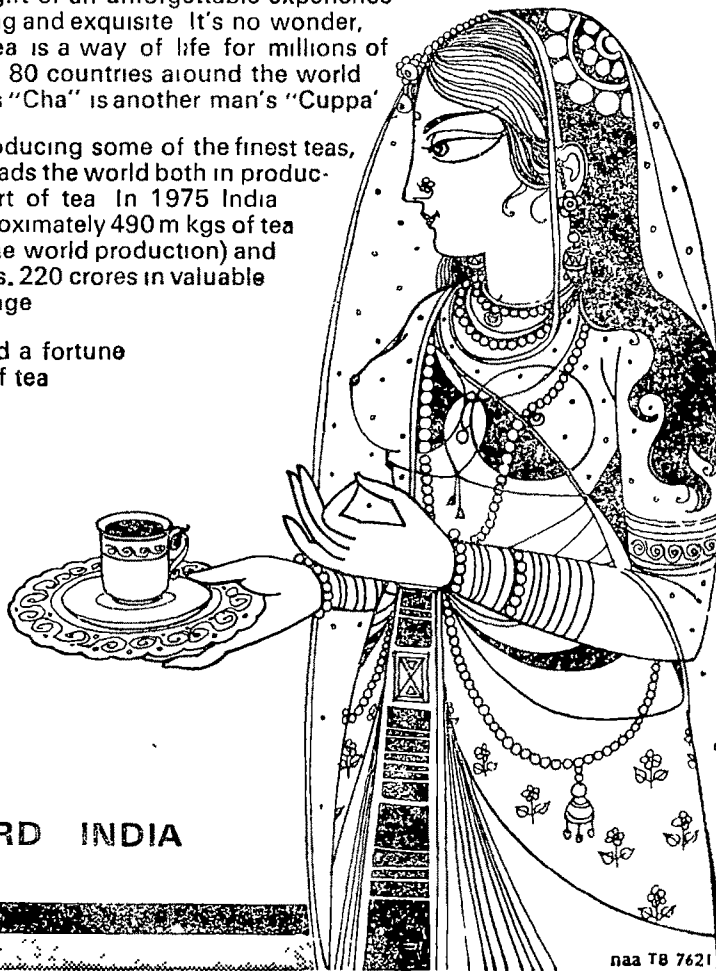
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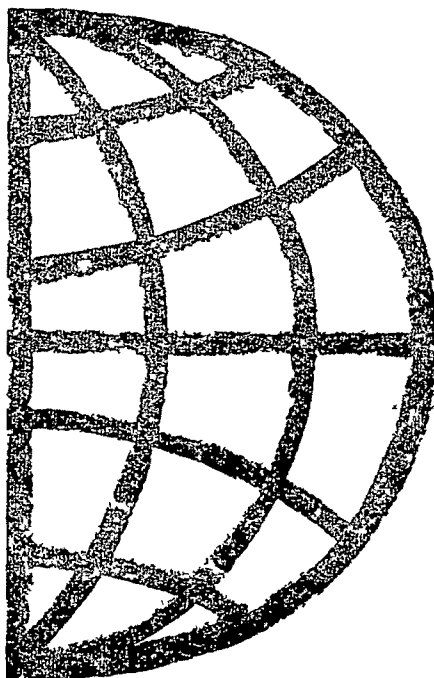


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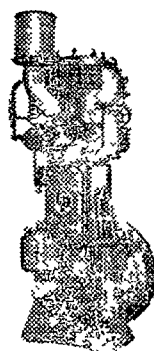
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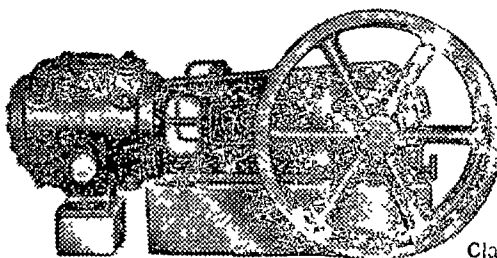
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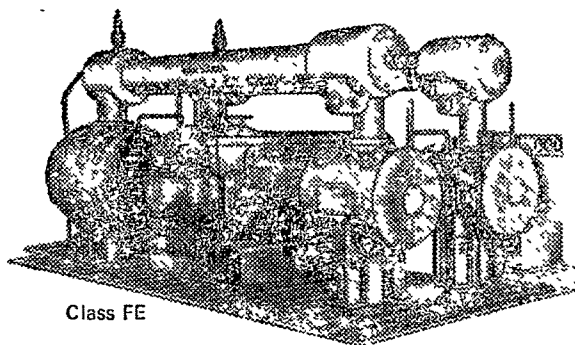
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ATDC-10/77

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After its constitution, the Chandigarh Housing Board invited applications for the allotment of houses to three categories of applicants, viz., the economically weaker sections, the low income group and the middle income group. The applicants were required to have been residents of U.T., Chandigarh, for a period of at least three years. There was an overwhelming demand, and on the basis of this demand the Chandigarh Housing Board has embarked upon a large scale programme of construction of houses.

2. Schemes have been sanctioned and funds and land already provided for the construction of 2700 dwelling units for persons of the aforesaid categories. The construction of 1800 dwelling units are at various stages of implementation, while the construction of 900 dwelling units will start early in 1978. This construction programme involves an estimated outlay of Rs. 4.45 crores and The Housing & Urban Development Corporation, New Delhi, is giving loan assistance of the order of Rs. 3.43 crores for these houses. With the completion of these constructions by the middle of 1979, all the persons who applied in response to the advertisement in 1976 will get houses on a hire-purchase basis. It will also be possible by such time to allot houses to those persons who applied in 1971 for the allotment of plots under the Model Scheme framed by the Chandigarh Administration but who were unsuccessful in the draw of lots. Service shops are also under construction in Sector 40-A to provide facilities to the prospective allottees.

3. Out of these 2700 dwelling units which have been sanctioned and are being constructed, 2275 are of the low income group and EWS categories.

4. The Chandigarh Housing Board has prepared a Supplementary Building Programme for the construction of more than 4000 dwelling units in addition to the 2700 dwelling units already in hand. More than 75% of the buildings to be constructed are for the economically weaker sections and the low income group categories.

5. The Chandigarh Housing Board has invited fresh applications by 15-1-1978, and has offered various types of houses on modest terms in a period of two to three years.

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It happened that the traders of the sea port town of Bharukaccha who hoped for a successful voyage persuaded him to be their skipper. Upon the high seas the ship was overtaken by a storm. Seven hundred souls aboard this ship were in fear of death.

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"Ye merchants and Ye Gods be my witness, that never in my life have I injured any living. By the power of this truth and the strength of my merit may the ship return in safety."

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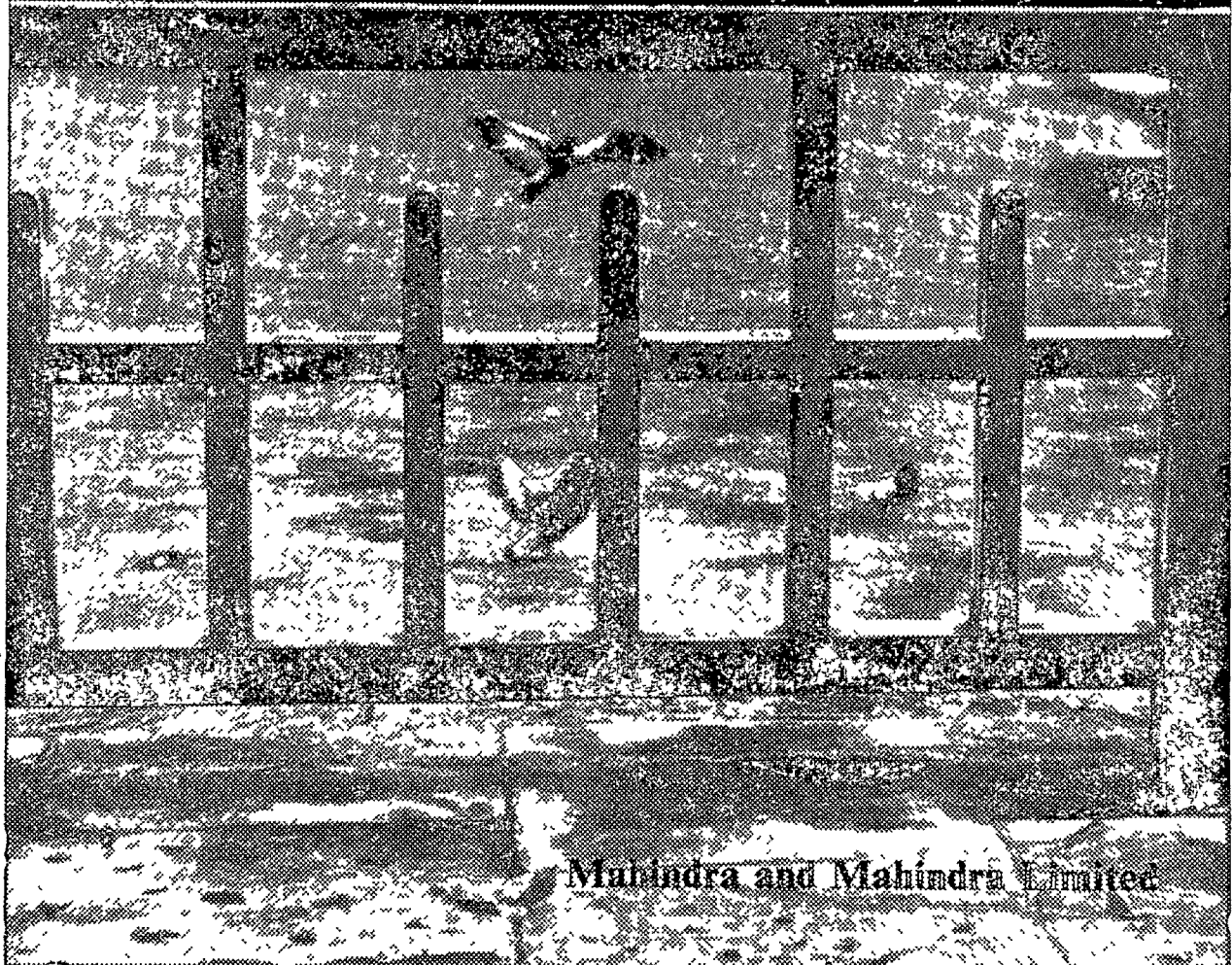


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BHEL has been in time with the times in the field of exports. Over 30 countries the world over have already preferred BHEL—the orders ranging from individual equipment to a total power plant.

BHEL has been in time with the growing needs for employment; it employs over 53,000 people directly and has generated employment potential for thousands more, indirectly. It's been in time in stepping up staff welfare measures, implementing progressive labour policies and grooming human skills.

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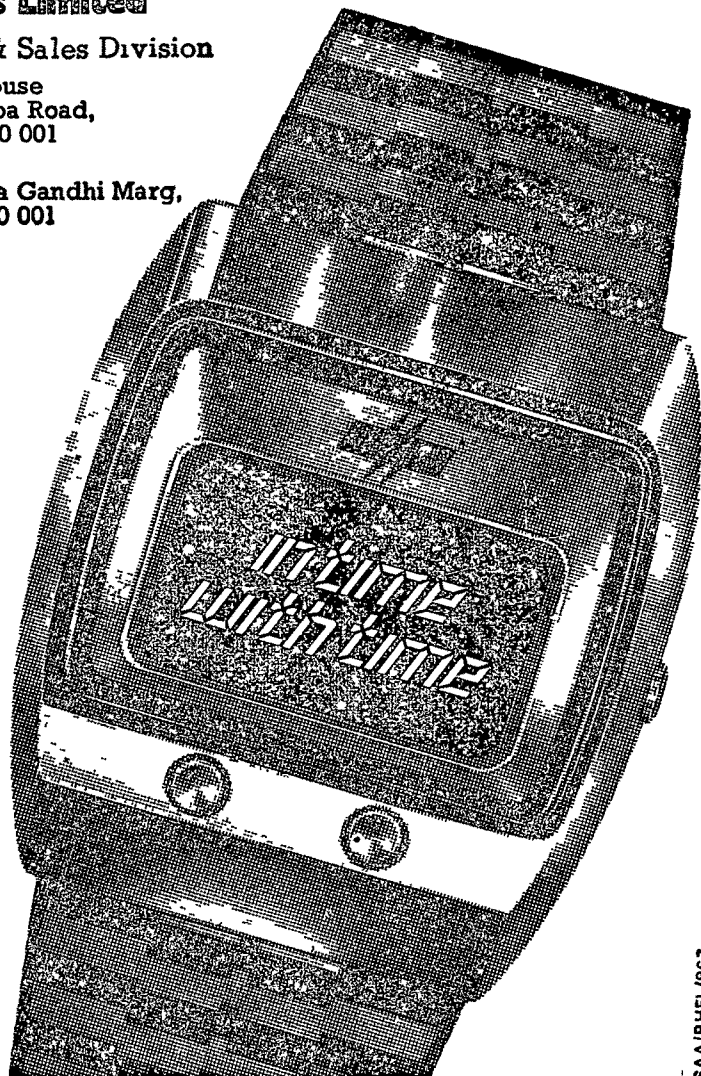


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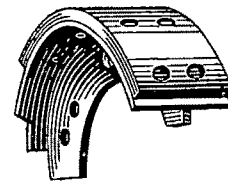


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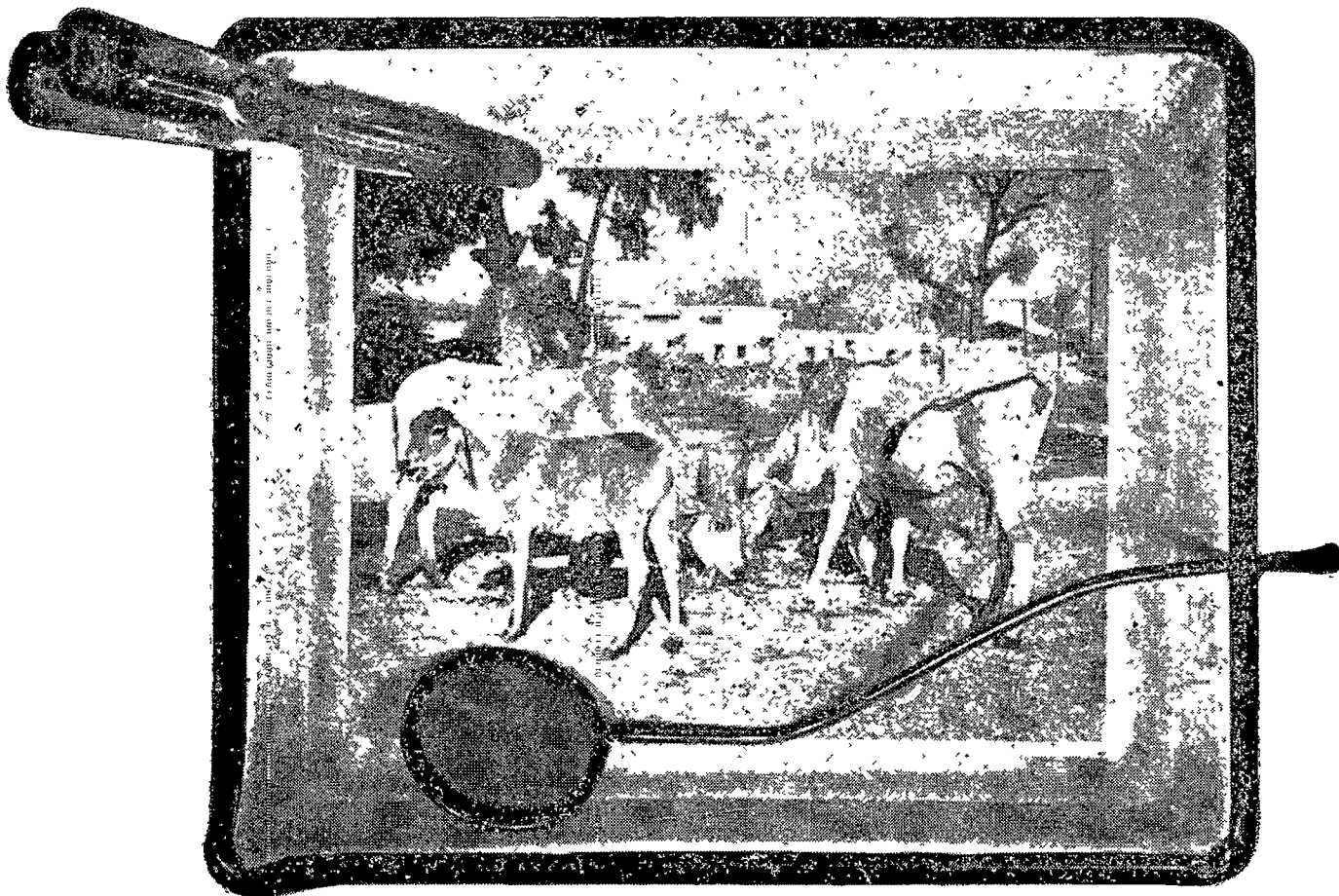


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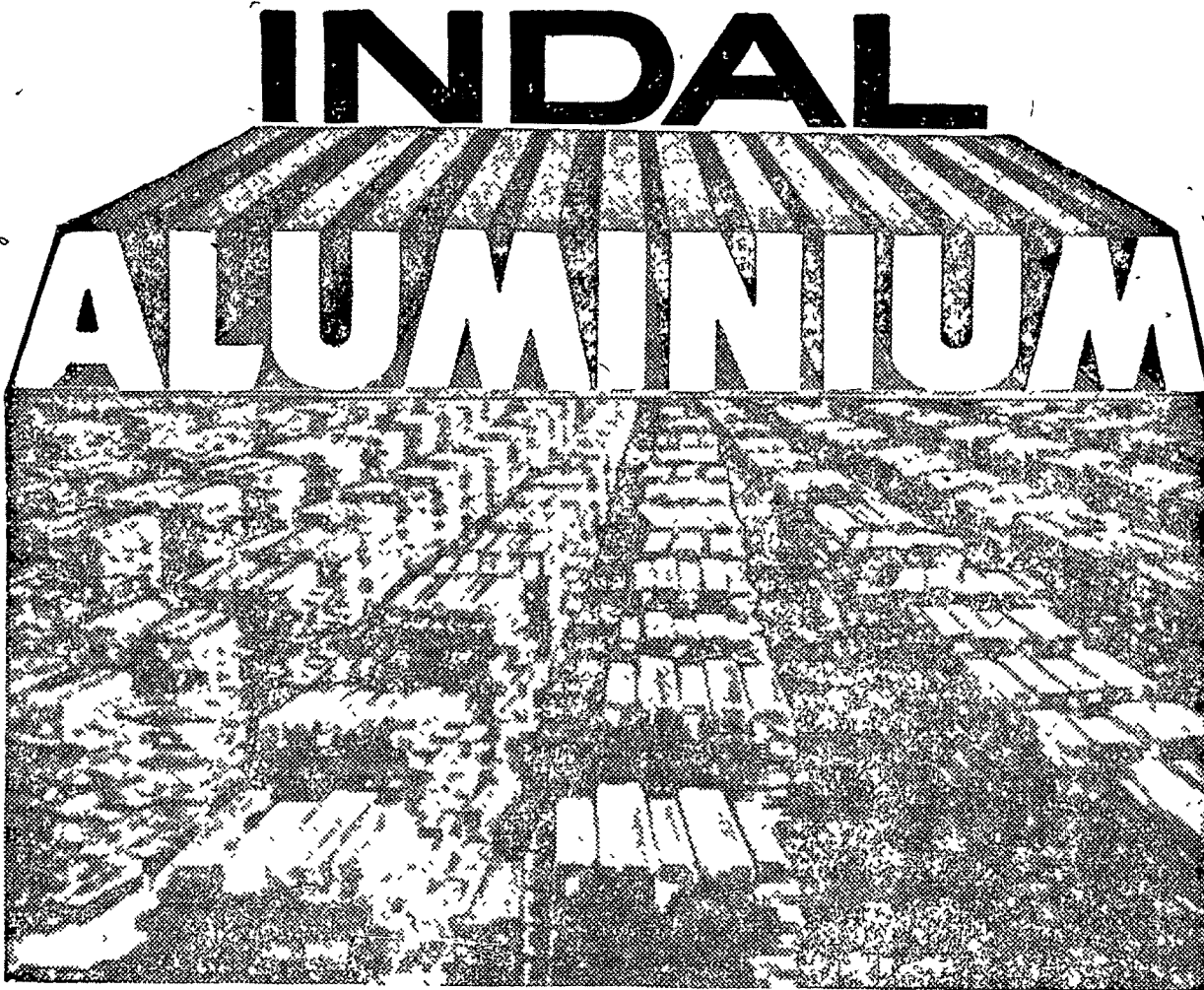
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OUR INTELLECTUALS

a symposium on
the crisis of
relevance and credibility

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The problem

INTELLECTUALS are a ubiquitous, if somewhat disagreeable, feature of contemporary societies. By some they are thought of as creating what is best in a society, its cherished values and ideals; by others as being idle, unproductive and parasitical. Most would probably agree that, whether for good or evil, intellectuals are very much preoccupied with themselves.

Intellectuals differ greatly among themselves in terms of the background they come from, the tasks they perform, the esteem they enjoy, the influence they command and the ideals they set for themselves. Since the nineteenth century there has been in every country, without exception, both an expansion and a diversification of the category of people known as intellectuals. As a result, the term 'intellectual' has acquired a very broad, perhaps even a loose meaning. An even broader term is 'intelligentsia', used in the socialist countries of Europe to refer to all those who are engaged in what are called 'mental' as opposed to 'manual' occupations.

Even the term 'intellectual' has a broader mean-

ing in some European languages, such as French and Italian, than in English. But for the present purpose, in order to give our discussion some focus, it will be useful to set some limits to its meaning. Intellectuals may then be defined as those who are concerned primarily with the creation, interpretation and transmission of ideas. The definition still remains loose, because very few people in fact create new ideas, and most people, if not all, transmit them in one sense or another. In more concrete terms, the loose category 'intellectual' is in most contemporary societies made up of certain core elements: academic intellectuals, i.e., scholars and scientists; creative writers, i.e., novelists, playwrights and poets; and journalists and critics. These elements are listed as being typical; they are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

What are the various relations between the intellectuals — scholars, scientists, novelists, playwrights, poets, journalists and critics — and the wider society in which they exist? Professor P.C. Mahalanobis, one of the leading and most influential intellectuals

of independent India, is reported to have said, on being provoked by Nehru, that intellectuals 'should be on top, not on tap'. Should they?

Intellectuals who have written about themselves have differed greatly in their assessment of their own role in society. One may contrast the views of Karl Mannheim, a leading German intellectual of the inter-war years, those of Antonio Gramsci who wrote his best work in an Italian prison in the late twenties and early thirties. Mannheim was a liberal, one of the twentieth century founders of what has come to be called the sociology of knowledge; Gramsci was a communist, celebrated since his death as one of the most creative Marxist writers since Marx himself.

Mannheim maintained that in the modern world (he was thinking primarily of West European countries) the position occupied by the intellectuals was markedly ambivalent. They had strong roots in neither the possessing nor the dispossessed classes; to a far greater extent than any other category of comparable significance, they were unattached.

This gave them a certain advantage, a clarity of vision which enabled them to judge an issue and decide on a course of action in an objective and rational spirit. From this one may draw, if one chooses, the extreme liberal conclusion that intellectuals are neither 'for' nor 'against' but, rather, they are above the fray.

Gramsci's assessment of the role and function of the intellectual in society was altogether different. After making a distinction between what he called 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals, he went on to say of the latter, 'The intellectuals are dominant group's "deputies", exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government'. Gramsci's immediate experience was of conditions in Italy under a fascist regime, but his remarks were meant, quite clearly, to apply to bourgeois societies in general. Had he lived longer he might have reflected on the logic by which a subaltern role for the intellectuals came to be fixed much more clearly in Stalin's Russia than in the bourgeois democracies of England, France and America. This was indeed

seen and described since his death by a whole series of writers from the socialist countries, from Djilas to Solzhenitsyn.

Gramsci's example shows very well that although freedom of thought and intellectual autonomy are valued by all intellectuals, they are not absolute values for all. This is an issue which demands some serious consideration. Why should intellectuals wish to surrender, of their own free will, even a portion of their freedom or autonomy? This can be justified only by an ethic of responsibility which calls for the subordination of the individual, who is a part, to society, which is the whole. The problem arises because what appears in principle to be a subordination of the individual to society becomes in practice the subordination of some individuals to other individuals who happen to be in positions of power.

But, perhaps, in the majority of cases the intellectual does not surrender his freedom or autonomy voluntarily; rather, there are external constraints to which he submits sullenly, grudgingly or fatalistically. In the light of recent experience, the form of external constraint which most people are likely to think of is the control exercised by the State. But it would be a mistake to reflect on State control only when it acquires a pathological form, as it did during the Emergency; intellectuals must reflect, perhaps even more seriously, on the nature and implications of State control in its normal form.

One has to be careful in one's use of the distinction between the normal and the pathological, for what appears to be pathological by the standards of one society might come to be accepted as normal in another society, as it did to some extent in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Basically the question is one of standards, and intellectuals have an obligation not only to provide expert advice to governments but, even more fundamentally, to create and sustain among people the consciousness by which such standards are accepted or rejected.

In its normal day-to-day working, State control affects the intellectual in the form of bureaucratic bluster and interference. It does not affect all intellectuals equally or in the same way. Intellectuals who work in institutions and organisations, particularly government and semi-government organisations, such as scientists, are much more directly and severely affected by this than those who work on their own, such as poets. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the development of intellectual life in the twentieth century is the extent to which, even in the economically backward countries, it has become organised. Today, neither science nor scholarship can be pursued very far by the individual on his own; to make his pursuit effective he has to work in either a university or a research institute. Barely two hundred years have elapsed since Benjamin Franklin shook the world with scientific discoveries that he made privately and on his own.

Bureaucratic interference in the affairs of scientists and scholars is in the normal case neither simple nor

straightforward. Nevertheless, it can be made quite pervasive and effective through mediating agencies staffed by academic administrators or academics turned administrators. A common and persistent complaint among working scholars and scientists is that the most insidious obstruction to their work comes not from government officials as such, but from their own senior colleagues who have turned away from their vocation to become academic administrators.

Government interference in academic affairs is tolerated or even welcomed because government is the paymaster, our universities, national laboratories and institutes of advanced study cannot function, let alone expand their activities, without funds from government. But government need not be and, indeed, is not the only paymaster. Are private funding agencies less meddlesome and more civilised than the agencies of government?

In India there is no major private foundation such as Ford, Nuffield or Rockefeller to support scholarly or scientific activity on a large scale. On the other hand, there is a multitude of petty private trusts through which the financial side of college education is widely controlled. Anyone who is even casually acquainted with the working of these private agencies knows how depressing and utterly destructive of academic values they are. Eminent scholars and scientists who work in centres of advanced study know at first hand only of outside interference from government officials. For all their petty officiousness, such people might appear as angels of civility when compared with the swindlers and racketeers who are in control of private educational institutions.

Whereas scholars and scientists are likely to suffer most from bureaucratic interference, the immediate pressures with which creative writers and journalists have to contend are more typically those from organised commercial interests. Creative writers and journalists address themselves directly to much larger audiences than academics, hence how the market for what they write is organised is their prime concern. Commercial interests everywhere profit from the promotion of vulgar tastes, and novelists, playwrights and poets could well wonder if official patronage might not be a lesser evil than what they have in fact to face.

State power and the power of organised commercial interests are only two of the issues which intellectuals have to face. There are other issues of an equally fundamental nature which should command their attention in a country like India. Where do the intellectuals stand in relation to the orthodoxy of tradition, particularly religious tradition? How far are they able to reach beyond the constraints of a narrow nationalism to a broader conception of humanity?

It has become a cliché to say that in India the relationship between religion and society is and

always has been unique in character. It is true that at least in recent times religious orthodoxy has not been organised against free intellectual enquiry in the way in which it has been in Christian or Islamic countries. The makers of modern India — Nehru, Tagore, Gandhi — all set themselves consciously against religious intolerance, and when they referred back to India's religious tradition, they did so in order to underline the pluralistic nature of this tradition.

But, religion affects the quality of intellectual life not only as a doctrine and through its organisation, but also in a more diffuse way through its values. Much has been said about the pluralistic character of Hinduism, its tolerance of divergent creeds, ideas and ways of life. One would like to know how much of this tolerance was and still is, despite the loftiness of the principle, in fact a tolerance of ignorance, prejudice and superstition. In recent years a number of scholars have argued against the thesis that Hinduism as such is an obstacle to economic development. But there is perhaps an even more fundamental question than this, which would ask how far the Hindu proclivity for adding new items of thought without discarding old ones prevents the crystallisation of any coherent system of thought.

In the Hindu religious tradition, in addition to the principle of pluralism—and, some would say, encompassing it—there was the principle of hierarchy. Despite the official commitment to democracy and development, the spirit of hierarchy continues to animate Indian society. It is in this sense more than in any other that Hinduism is the religion of all Indians. Muslims and Christians as well as Hindus, modernists as well as traditionalists, show the same jealous concern for hierarchy and status.

It is often said that the intellectual culture of India is basically Brahminical in spirit, no matter what may be the proportion of those who are actually Brahmins among the various categories of intellectuals. Whoever becomes an intellectual becomes a neo-Brahmin. Perhaps the Brahminical spirit is most markedly in evidence among academic intellectuals—scientists and scholars alike—who, to be sure, everywhere place a certain premium on the display of virtuosity for its own sake. Does the Indian academic culture tend to place a special emphasis on the pursuit of the esoteric, even by the standards of academic cultures in general? If this be so, what implications does it have for the communication of ideas between academic and other intellectuals, and between intellectuals and the rest of society?

It is further said that Indian academics—natural scientists in particular, but also a growing body of social scientists—are largely interested in communicating with academics elsewhere and hardly interested in communicating with other Indians. This is inevitable up to a point, but beyond that point it can be profoundly damaging to the growth

of an academic community—and, by extension, of an intellectual culture—in India. The institutions of science and scholarship need not grow in exactly the same way in every country, at the same time, the growth of an academic community has now become an indispensable condition for the pursuit of excellence in science and scholarship.

The preoccupation of Indian intellectuals with centres of excellence outside naturally brings on them the charge of subservience. This kind of charge is made not only against scientists and scholars but also against novelists, playwrights, journalists and, indeed, against painters, sculptors and film-makers as well. An ugly feature of writing in Hindi, for instance, consists of the charges and counter-charges of plagiarism flung about among writers who are, for purposes of classification, labelled as creative. Plagiarism among intellectuals—whether playwrights or scholars—is of course as old as the trade itself: what is at issue here is not plagiarism as such, but a one-sided dependence on external centres for creative inspiration as well as criteria of evaluation.

The surrender to external, primarily western, centres of intellectual excellence generates its own backlash. The irrational adulation of everything western is matched by an equally irrational, and also virulent, denunciation of everything western. Nowhere in Indian society is there such a blind, irrational hatred of western civilisation as among western educated intellectuals themselves. A kind of rationalisation for all this is being sought increasingly in the works of men like Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru. It is astonishing that people should forget that their hatred of the West is the very negation of the values of civility which these men of vision tried, let us hope not wholly unsuccessfully, to establish in Indian society on a permanent basis.

Indian intellectuals will have to learn to deal with the problem of nationalism on intellectual terms, which means without malice and without self-righteousness. Given the importance of the problem, it is surprising how little serious literature there is on it. A purely materialist interpretation of nationalism can carry us only some distance, but beyond that we will have to reach into the inner structures of thought which seem to be so irresistibly attuned to nationalism in our country.

Among all the prevalent ideologies in India, it is neither Hinduism nor any other established religion, but militant nationalism which is likely to present the most serious threat to the free and unfettered pursuit of ideas. The threat of nationalism to the pursuit of ideas lies precisely in this, that it puts deeply-rooted passions at the service of State power. Intellectuals may or may not have learnt in the last couple of years how to protest against the abuse of State power; in the years to come they will certainly need to learn how to resist the passions of the people.

ANDRE BETEILLE

Learned or wise?

C. T. KURIEN

THE book of Daniel in the Bible records the story of Belshazzar, the Babylonian king who, following the pattern set by his more famous predecessor Nebuchadnezzar, had a

very large retinue and a very cosmopolitan court. The king also had the custom of holding feasts for his officers and courtiers. On one of these grand occasions when

the whole company was merrily drinking, 'they saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the plaster of the wall opposite the lampstand. The king himself saw the fingers as they wrote. His face blanched with fear and such terror gripped him that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way beneath him'. The king sent for the scholars of the court to read to him the writing on the wall and interpret it to him. They could read what was written on the wall (for it was in familiar Aramaic) but it did not make sense to them. They could not understand it and interpret it.

The problem gets repeated time and again. The scholars can read, but do not understand. They know, but do not discern. This is the paradox and the dilemma of the 'intellectuals'.

The intellectuals, obviously, have knowledge. They have been identified as those who are primarily concerned with the creation, interpretation and transmission of ideas. But intellectuals must not only be learned. Baran has drawn a distinction between those who are merely 'intellect workers' and those who can be classed as 'intellectuals'. (Paul Baran: 'The Commitment of the Intellectual', *Monthly Review*, May 1961.) The former are those working with their minds, rather than with their muscles: relying for their livelihood (or if they need not worry about such things, for the gratification of their interests) on their brain rather than on their brawn. 'Intellectuals' on the other hand, are those who systematically relate whatever specific area they may be working in to other aspects of human existence. The hallmark of the intellectual, therefore, is not knowledge *per se*, but the ability to relate, to discern, to interpret. Without it the intellectual gets reduced to a mere intellect worker at best, with the ability to read but without the capacity to interpret.

Why does it happen? Why do the intellectuals fail to discern the signs of the times? Why do they surrender so readily? These are the questions to be examined.

The pursuit of knowledge itself has a tendency to isolate. The scholar gets absorbed in his books and devoted to his discipline. And in our times knowledge proliferates, multiplies and explodes. Those who get caught up in that process are frequently taken to its lonely frontiers — the expanding frontiers — along forlorn paths and difficult new trails. There is so much to be absorbed which takes time and concentration. New skills have to be developed, new vocabulary has to be learned. And there is the constant fear that even in one's own chosen field one cannot keep up and is becoming obsolete. The tendency, therefore, is constantly to narrow down the field of concern and enquiry and to specialise in increasingly narrower areas. As the cliché has it, scholars learn more and more about less and less.

In this almost unavoidable process the votaries of knowledge lose their capacity to relate themselves meaningfully to the broader spheres of their own fields, not to speak of other aspects of human existence. They are also led to carve out their own areas of concern and expertise, building walls around them and shutting themselves in. The assumption usually is that there are others to occupy territories that one deliberately excludes. This may or may not be so. And in any case, one seldom looks beyond one's own walls even to see whether there is a crowd or a vacuum around it.

This is not the only problem that the pursuit of knowledge presents. It also develops a high fecundity of the mind to produce concepts and images, and in effect to recreate the universe. This too is something of a built-in tendency in the world of knowledge. In the unknown territories of knowledge the mind moves by making images, by creating forms. Even in known areas, the mind proceeds by setting up images, picking up images, and at times reconstructing images. 'The image', says Boulding, 'is the subjective content of knowledge.'

This is not to say that every scholar has a complete and separate

image of the area of his concern. In the academic community there are the few who are image-makers and the many are just their followers. And yet the process is general. You need your own or somebody else's image to see and to comprehend. A trained mind is thus always creating images, setting up universes of discourse. But there is virtually nothing in this exercise to set boundaries and to insist that the mind should make images only of those areas and events that it is directly related to.

In fact, the mind has a high propensity to roam about in unfamiliar spheres, setting up images about them also. It is not always the case that one relates oneself to all the images that one picks up or creates. But it is a fact of experience that one relates more readily to these images than to the reality that they are supposed to represent.

Thus, in the processes of abstraction and speculation which underlie a great deal of the pursuit of knowledge scholars are always creating their own world. This is the reason why it turns out often that 'for good or evil, the intellectuals are very much preoccupied with themselves'. Through their high fecundity to produce their own worlds and their equally high propensity to dwell therein, the intellectuals also lose their ability to relate themselves to the real world around them inhabited by ordinary mortals.

Examples are not difficult to come by. The problem is most acutely seen among the scholars who specialise in disciplines which are notionally at least related to the problems of the real world — economics for instance. While the world outside is impressed by its achievements, and other social sciences view with envy its professional progress, within its ranks many leading scholars are uneasy about its course. Leontief, for instance, addressing himself to fellow economists admits that the uneasiness 'is caused not by the irrelevance of the practical problems to which present day economists address their efforts, but rather by the palpable inade-

quacy of the scientific means with which they try to solve them.'

He goes on to say: 'I submit that the consistently indifferent performance in practical applications is in fact a symptom of a fundamental imbalance in the present state of our discipline. The weak and all too slowly growing empirical foundation clearly cannot support the proliferating superstructure of pure, or I should say speculative economic theory'. (W. Leontief 'Theoretical Assumptions and Non-observed Facts' — Presidential Address, American Economic Association, 1970).

It should not be assumed that having set up their own worlds the scholars dwell therein for ever. They are aware of the existence of the affairs around them and are also eager to be involved in it whether or not they can relate themselves to it. In this sense the intellectuals of today are very different from their predecessors who, in the pursuit of knowledge, remained in their own worlds of monasteries and ashrams. Today's scholars have become self-conscious of their isolation. Today's scholars are also aware of the power that knowledge gives them to influence the world around them. Hence they are eager to cover up their basic sense of isolation through a process 'of involvement'.

The opportunities for such involvement are also increasing. The world outside too has become aware of the power of knowledge. It may arise from the superstitious faith in the ability of science to solve life's problems. It may be a reflection of the growing hold of knowledge over the routines of life in a rapidly changing society. Whatever it may be, society too is eager to have the savants come out of their cloisters into the busy meeting places of life.

But because the intellectuals are intellectually and emotionally isolated from the real world, their involvements are basically interferences. These take various forms. One of the commonest is the desire to dominate, 'to be on top' always. In the early days of our freedom movement one of our leaders

asserted, fully convinced of the innate logic of his claim: 'The educated community represents the brain and conscience of the country and are the legitimate spokesmen of the illiterate masses, the natural custodian of their interests ... It is true in all ages that those who think must govern those who toil' (Ramesh Chandra Mitra in the welcome address to the Indian National Congress, 1896). The divine right theory of the intellectuals to rule and to lead is not so explicitly stated these days, but that is only because experience has taught them that they must not only be scholarly but subtle also.

Whatever may be the claims of the intellectuals to rule, those who effectively wield power in society are aware of their eagerness to be involved. They know too that in the hands of those who exercise power, knowledge can be used as an instrument to consolidate that power. Thus, the desire of the intellectuals to involve themselves in society and the designs of the rulers to use the 'intellectuals' for their own purposes meet in the market place. In an increasingly commercialised society where there is a price-tag for everything, scholars take the view that knowledge too can be converted into a vendible commodity. And, perhaps, not knowing how the market operates they may also persuade themselves to believe that the higher the price, the higher the 'value' that society attaches to knowledge and to the services of its votaries. A market then comes to be established with its supply and demand schedules with those who supply, taking the rational view that their commodity must be sold to the highest bidder. Knowledge thus becomes the knowledge industry with the intellect workers specialising in different aspects of it, some in producing it, some in advertising it and many in retailing it.

It must be noted that it is a pattern of involvement that is convenient to buyers and sellers alike. The buyers know that what they buy is not knowledge, but the services of those who deal in knowledge

and they know too how to get their money's worth out of them. For the sellers it is a matter of prestige to be recognised by the powers that be and to feel that their services have been recognised and made use of for society at large. And because it is a market arrangement, they do not have to assume any responsibility for what they sell except that there is a 'genuine demand' for their wares and that the consumer must be satisfied.

Under normal circumstances the sale is effected with the proviso that 'goods once sold cannot be taken back or exchanged' so that there is no sense of responsibility beyond the point of transaction. Once the transactions come to be frequent, both sides may feel also that, instead of a piece-rate transaction, a time-rate transaction is more advantageous. The 'intellectuals' then become part of the establishment receiving their stipulated retainer fees.

Spelt out in such crude terms some of this may appear to be not respectable, or at least not the kind of things to be associated with those who create, transmit and interpret ideas. And yet there is nothing in all this that is inherently incompatible with the pursuit of knowledge.

The pursuit of knowledge in itself is no different from the pursuit of wealth or the pursuit of power. Neither is the pursuit of wealth or of power unworthy in itself. Hence, if they can become corrupted so can the pursuit of knowledge. And a corrupt pursuit of knowledge does not prevent one from acquiring knowledge just as a corrupt pursuit of wealth does not prevent one from becoming wealthy! Only if one relates these to other aspects of human experience can one see where they go wrong. But it is precisely this desire to relate and the ability to relate that are destroyed when one sets for oneself too limited goals and too rigid boundaries. In this we have something of the explanation of why those who should be intellectuals become mere intellect workers, able to read the writing on the wall, but not

being able to understand it and interpret it.

How then can the true vocation of the intellectuals be kept alive? That sense of vocation does not come from learning, *cannot* come from learning. It comes, in the first instance by being constantly reminded about it by others who share the same vocation. Hence, for intellectuals to function as intellectuals it is necessary to have a sense of community. This community is provided first by fellow intellectuals, others in the pursuit of knowledge who also feel that the pursuit of knowledge is not to be an end in itself and that learning must enable one to relate oneself to other areas of human experience.

One of the first casualties in the commercial approach to knowledge is that sense of community that exists among those who are trying to relate themselves to one another in the common search for other dimensions of life. The breakdown of the community is noticed only during times of stress and pressure, for in their absence a superficial sense of community is kept up through rituals.

But, a community of scholars can still be isolated from the rest of society. Hence the vocation of the intellectuals can be truly exercised only to the extent that they are in touch with all sections of society and all aspects of life. Whitehead has rightly reminded us that all relatedness has its foundation in the relatedness of actualities. Close contacts with the actual, the concrete, including the very ordinary human beings who have no pretensions whatever to being intellectuals, is necessary to test whether the images that the intellectuals create about life and its processes illumine reality or cloud it. A difficult task for those engaged in scholarly pursuits is to translate their language into the language of daily life. And yet it was Enwin Schrodinger who insisted that all scientific effort must be viewed as part of man's endeavour to grasp the human situation and said: 'If you cannot — in the long run—tell everyone what you have

been doing, your doing has been worthless'.

Relating oneself to life's common tasks, however, involves much more than communication in a linguistic sense. It involves being united in action in the ordinary walks of life. It may appear that getting caught up in action is contrary to the true vocation of the intellectuals who are usually thought of as thinkers and not doers. But the dichotomy between thought and action is not valid. This is not only because action must be guided by thought, but also because action is necessary for true understanding also.

All who have attempted to relate themselves to many aspects of human experience—Lenin, Gandhi and Mao may be cited as examples—have found this to be the case. Lenin claimed that 'Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality'. The isolation of the intellectuals and their ineffectiveness in relating themselves to the manifold dimensions of life are to a large extent due to their failure to recognise action as the most universal language of ordinary life. It sets them apart from the majority of human beings and paves the way for them to confine themselves to just one aspect of human experience.

To be true to their vocation men of learning must commit themselves to something beyond ideas and knowledge. Knowledge cannot prevent its own corruption and it does not decide how it will be or is to be used. When men of learning find out that knowledge can be sold for the price of silver, it cannot prevent them. Men of learning become addicted to man's empty praise: knowledge cannot protect them. Men of learning bend their knees before insolent might: knowledge cannot strengthen them. So the intellectuals must search not only for knowledge, but for wisdom also. They must be committed to something that cannot be appropriated but demands their loyalties and enables them to see life in its totality.

The academic professional

ROMILA THAPAR

PARADOXICALLY, it is when the functional role of the intellectual becomes more marked that there is the maximum claim on the intellectual's part to being disembedded from society. The emergence of intellectuals as a distinct group is relatively recent although

the academic intellectual has a much older existence. The supposed disembedding of the intellectual is a nineteenth century phenomenon, when the professional handling of new categories of knowledge gained an elevated status with the artisan falling back

to the level of the skilled workers. The elevation of status had to do both with the dependence of society on professional-based knowledge as well as the professional himself coming from the middle-class which increasingly became the inheritor of political power. The cultured aristocrat and the inspired dilettante of earlier times gave way to the professional intellectual.

A more subtle refinement distinguishing an intellectual from a professional was the implicit assumption of the ability of the former to focus on more than just the dimensions of his skills and to apprehend the quality of knowledge and its application to his society. (In the context of the academic intellectual, with which this article is concerned, a distinction may be suggested between the scholar who functions more in the nature of the skilled professional and the intellectual who, in addition to being a scholar, can project the application of the results of scholarship to his society). But this refinement although sharpening the definition also narrows its scope. The disparity between being a professional in the limited sense generally unconcerned with the wider application of knowledge and the intellectual recognising the need for a larger perspective is often at the root of the problem concerning the role of the intellectual.

The subaltern role of the intellectual is therefore not altogether surprising in view of his wider identity with the group in power since he cannot be completely rootless and classless. Complete autonomy is open only to those who are outside the society or are regarded as eccentrics or are free from the dependence on patronage. The absolute freedom of the intellectual is, to that extent, a myth. It has been fostered by the belief that democratic institutions are implicitly open and liberal and it is therefore possible for intellectuals to remain as observers above the fray. Political ideologies are often uncomfortable with the questioning which intellectual participation entails and would prefer intellectuals to comment at

a distance. This encourages the description of the intellectual as far-removed, isolated and unconcerned with the problems of his society. The more authoritarian the ideology the greater the emphasis on anti-intellectualism. (It is not entirely coincidental that the use of the derisory term 'egg-head' for intellectuals and particularly for the academic variety had its most frequent use in the mass media in the United States during the McCarthy era)

This attitude is accepted in some intellectual circles as it spares them from having to take carefully considered positions on the controversies of the day. The populist emphasis that intellectual objectivity lies in being at a distance from the problem is unfortunately often accepted by many intellectuals. The argument that intellectuals should not be politically involved does not mean that they should avoid analysing political problems, as it is frequently understood to mean. The freedom of the intellectual in the abstract is an ideal and, in actuality, is a relative situation dependent upon the framework of the society, generally epitomised in the State system.

The State comes more clearly into focus as the expression of power in societies moving towards representative forms and industrial technology and sustained by nationalist ideologies. What is more significant is that in such situations the State takes on a monolithic aspect, which in earlier times had been more diffused. Militant nationalism and populism whether they select race, religion or caste as their ideological avenue will attempt to use the State as their agent. The intellectual has to decide quite consciously as to how he will relate to the State — as participant or supporter or opponent. The role of observer more often than not, is a euphemism for the first two categories. Alternative systems can only be effective if they are powerful or if there is the feasibility of building an alternative society. The freedom of the intellectual essentially lies in his right to be critical of authority if need be, to suggest changes without the fear of suffering for his non-conformity.

The poser rightly argues that militant nationalism is likely to present the most serious threat to the free and unfettered pursuit of ideas. It becomes necessary therefore to be aware of the dimensions and forms of militant nationalism. The distinction between nationalism and militant nationalism needs constant emphasis. The former expresses itself in the focus on development and the prevention of foreign intervention of a kind which may be seen as inimical to development. Militant nationalism expresses itself as national chauvinism. It not only appeals to emotion alone but denies attempts at rational explanation. The diffusion of knowledge is seen essentially as a catechism in which questions and answers are pre-ordained.

Militant nationalism inevitably makes an appeal to tradition. But this raises the more fundamental questions of the identification of the former as well as those aspects of the latter to which the appeal is being made; the legitimacy of the shape which is being given to tradition by militant nationalism and the reason for this. There are questions with political implications and are therefore often skirted round. Cultural nationalism, particularly in a colonial context, treats tradition as a holistic and sacred entity. This treatment requires to be explored

In the construction of intellectual traditions there is a continual interplay between those who opt out of the system for whatever reason and the attempts of the intellectual establishment to accommodate such dissent to suit its own needs or should the dissent become too powerful. In India the intellectual context has been discussed with little meaningful reference to this interplay. It is assumed that the intellectual tradition has functioned like a sponge, mopping up everything. For example, what is often defined as the Hindu tradition is the syncretic amalgam of nineteenth century social reformers and Indologists who maintained that its growth was a continuous process of the new accreting onto the old. They emphasised continuity, tolerance,

powers of absorption and assimilation, since these were relevant to the particular problems of nationalism in nineteenth century India. Yet the most powerful thrust of at least one facet of the Hindu tradition—in the Bhagavat and Bhakti tradition—is characterised by the discarding of the old as and where necessary.

It has been argued that sectarian conflict, heterodoxy and protest are alien to the broader Indian tradition in spite of the many occasions in the past when precisely such forms of dissent have been prevalent. That they are frequently not recognised by modern scholars may be due to the fact that, as in many other similar societies, such activities were often manifest in the garb of religious movements. Sectarian rivalries and conflicts, sometimes of a violent kind, often carry social and political dimensions which scholars have so far tended to ignore—acrimonious debates on theories of knowledge were not devoid of a social context. The detailed organisation and administration of individual religious sects and their properties did impinge on political requirements and associations. The containment of dissent either took the form of dissenters opting out into an alternative system such as ascetic groups or monastic orders where the impact of their dissent would depend on the power of the alternative system; or was impounded by social barriers which acted as obstacles to the diffusion of dissent as in a variety of caste taboos reducing the potential of inter-caste association.

There was also, as in many other societies, the system of modifying and absorbing some aspects of dissent which in turn changed certain trends in the intellectual establishment. The latter rarely confesses to radical change in any society and by accepting its unchanging continuity in the Indian past, the dimension of change has been overlooked. There was and continues to be a general absence of an analytical exegesis into the Indian intellectual tradition except at the level of interpreting it in a nationalist context. By treating dissent as somehow unIndian, it is

sought to be negated. The few modern scholars who have pointed to the existence of intellectual tensions, conflicts, protests in the past, have either been ignored or have been dismissed as being politically motivated.

One of the negative effects of nationalism is that it debars critical self-analysis at the national level. Popular descriptions of those that attempt this calls them alienated or disloyal. The exclusiveness and suspicion engendered by exaggerated nationalism has of course been known to take very perverse forms, such as fascism. In the tensions of underdevelopment such forms can become more imminent, and in this situation, the critics of militant nationalism are attacked as distorters and frauds. The attack is never at an intellectual level but is essentially an emotional assault.

Inevitably, it is the social sciences which are the largest victims of this kind of attack. The ideology of militant nationalism, since it lacks an intellectual base, makes no concession to counter-cultures or dissent. It is by its very nature impervious to modifications or change, or even to analyses. The accommodation of the counter-culture in the intellectual establishment was and is a tried method of containing protest and rebellion. What is accommodated has however its own significance and needs to be recognised, as does the point at which the accommodation occurs. That which has acquired power is accommodated and this happens at the point prior to a situation of confrontation bordering on revolt. The attempt of the intellectual establishment is to concentrate and centralise patronage which not only gives it flexibility of manipulation but also more power to soak in dissidence when necessary. The more resilient a system, the greater its ability to discard the redundant, incorporate the new and adjust to change at the right time.

The State as the agency which works this system has become increasingly perceptible in recent decades. Nationalism and democracy introduce the impersonal system of the representatives of society, where in theory, the

inequities of the earlier system are sought to be overcome. The ideological and 'real-life' constraints on a democratic system need far more attention than they are generally given. In a sense Weber's fears regarding the impact of the 'bureaucratic system' have been borne out.

Without taking the extreme anarchist position of the *nouvelles philosophes* and arguing that the State is Gulag and is everywhere and has to be countered, one has to concede that the presence of the State is overpowering. Not only does Althusser give it the status almost of the superstructure but even Gramsci's concept of hegemony focuses on the role of the State. The mushroom growth of studies on fascism and dictatorial systems in the last decade is an indication of interest in the functions of the State. This is not merely a concern with the politics of the twentieth century but the realisation that the State is the new patron and can dominate intellectual life.

From the point of view of the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, the involvement of the State appears almost unavoidable in contemporary times. Any area of research no matter how remote or esoteric requires the intermeshing of information from various channels of knowledge and the need for communication between these channels, and at some levels the need for co-ordination. With increasing specialisation the function of communication and co-ordination becomes the pivot in the growth of knowledge. Individuals in institutions can co-ordinate upto a limited point. But in a network of laboratories, computers and the fast flow of data, it is very often only the State which can perform this function efficiently.

Backyard discoveries are no longer the backbone of science since even the simplest observation has to undergo complicated application and testing before it can be accepted as an innovation in knowledge. A lifetime of laborious labour can be saved by using sophisticated facilities as has been demonstrated recently in the work on the Harappa script. The gentleman scholar working

quietly in his private library is an image of the past since fundamental research today requires a well-equipped library cutting across many disciplines.

In the sciences the laboratory is a *sine qua non* of any research. In the social sciences possibly a brilliant insight based on observation and the inter-connection of ideas may still result in a break-through in knowledge, but once again the occasional brilliant insight is no longer enough to sustain a body of knowledge or build an intellectual tradition. The more mundane process of testing such insights and refining the quality of generalisation is equally important. The latter cannot be done in isolation and without data.

Part of the problem of the low quality of the general academic level at Indian universities is that the facilities for research are inadequately funded or inappropriately utilised and are the first victims of budget cuts. There is a persistent belief that research rises like Venus unaided out of the shell of the human brain. It does, but not unaided. Who is to provide the laboratories and the libraries? The State, a private endowment, temple funds or party funds? The crisis of the relationship between the academic intellectual and the State arises both out of the changing political forms whereby the State is assuming more and more power as well as the change in the nature and communication of knowledge.

The academic intellectual has a choice of action. He can work towards a change in the application of knowledge by attempting to reorient the technological basis of society. This is often talked about but it frequently remains a catchphrase for the shrewd politician, a slogan for the anarchist and a mystic dream for the idealist. As an exercise it would be worth taking a specific area and working out the methods and implications of such a change at the empirical level. Such an exercise would either convince the disbelievers or silence the supporters.

Any purposeful action in this direction would require a considered

application of modern knowledge to improving the existing technology. The emphasis then is not on the discarding of modern knowledge but on changing the perspective and areas of application. This is very different from the slogans thrown by politicians at intellectuals demanding a back-to-the-village movement — so suited to the anti-intellectualism of militant nationalism and populist politics. The re-ordering of the application of modern knowledge could be one agency by which the power of the State as patron could be reduced.

Such a re-ordering is crucially necessary at this stage where the unending repetition of identical institutions calling themselves universities have in some cases almost reached a point of redundancy so far as the furtherance of knowledge is concerned or indeed even as training grounds for skilled professionals. The re-ordering of what constitutes a body of knowledge is as apposite as the re-ordering of the institutions. So much dead wood is carried by so many universities that this in itself constitutes a huge financial waste. The pruning of a body of knowledge is not to be confused with stripping knowledge down to a packet of received information — as so many governmental agencies would like it to be. The purposeful pruning of knowledge requires centres of innovative thought or at least the encouragement of innovative thought, and the ploughing-in of advances in knowledge at every level of the educational system.

Given the constraints of the mechanism of the State, the intellectual can try and assert his role in a more forceful manner. One aspect of this would be an attempt to reduce to a minimum the role of the State as the co-ordinator of intellectual and academic activity. This would require giving substance to what is often supported as policy: developing the university community as a *community* and not as a hierarchical structure of Vice-Chancellor et al., faculty and students, in effect, curtailing the powers of the administrative element to routine function and strengthening the roll of the intellectual component in both faculty and students and their inter-

action, the insistence that the university community and not the hierarchy of authority within the university be the final arbiter of academic problems; guarding university appointments from becoming patronage points for Vice-Chancellors and Ministers; upholding and supporting true autonomy of autonomous institutions even where they are financed by government; ensuring that the University Grants Commission does not become subservient to government; working towards a more flexible university system with a variety of institutions as, for example, some research oriented, some privately financed, where the governing is in the hands of the university community and not the patrons, the insistence on more direct communication between academics in various universities; the possibilities of joint appointments in two universities which would allow greater independence to the academic, and other means of preventing a monopoly of the State over the work of academic intellectuals.

Even the autonomy of the academic institution is not a sufficient safeguard. Administrative hierarchies in institutions of higher education and research frequently abrogate upto themselves the powers of the State and adopt a 'more-government-than-government' attitude. The autonomy of the individual academic has to be sustained and this can be strengthened only by academic colleagues. The assessors of his work are his colleagues — particularly those in the same discipline and area of work — and not the government. The community of academics are the arbiters of his professional work and he is professionally accountable to them.

An assertion of the academics' right to their own decisions in matters intellectual is long overdue. The plea that education has dimensions other than the academic has not resulted in what was being aimed at, namely, a development-based educational system, but in the subservience of the academic to the bureaucrat and the politician. The realisation of this subservience has been seen

more forcefully in the heightened consciousness regarding various 'freedoms' subsequent to the ending of the Emergency. What are described as the routine decisions of the bureaucrats and the politicians on academic matters have indicated the degree of abnormality which has entered the handling of such matters. It is certainly startling to find the Minister for Education making a policy statement that academics are not free to accept invitations to conferences or temporary positions from institutions outside India.

What is even more disturbing is that such a restriction is sought to be justified on grounds of 'national interests'. It is assumed that the government alone is the arbiter of national interests and this is an assumption which any free society must question. If 'national interests' in this context are the crucial reason as has been made out, then they must be clearly defined and fully discussed in public. National interests can vary from government to government in time. Recourse to 'national interests' carries its own dangers since the same justification can be given for a variety of bans, prohibitions and restrictions on syllabi, publications and other academic activities. Ultimately, the choice should rest with the academic as a free citizen to question 'national interests' if he so chooses, as could any other citizen.

These two aspects, namely, guarding against unauthorised State interference and a conscious attempt to build networks of communication with colleagues, would provide a modicum of independence and perhaps dull the edge of Gramsci's scathing criticism of the function of the intellectual as the 'deputy' of the dominant group. Patronage is not a one-way process. It only succeeds if there is a group willing to be subservient. If the nature of modern knowledge is such that it has to be dependent on the patronage of the State, the State in itself and in its methods of functioning is equally dependent on the expertise derived from modern knowledge in various fields, and it would be as well for the

patron to be reminded from time to time of its dependence on the client. The use of the terms 'patron' and 'client' is extremely deceptive as it hides the dependence of the State on the intellectual whether it be at the seemingly simple level of the extension of literacy or at the far more complex level of highly specialised expertise.

To abstain from accepting State finance would be a futile exercise in a situation where the only substantial source of finance for academic work is the State and where State finance implicitly furthers its own priorities of demands. But this should not be allowed to corrode the independence of the academic since his status as an intellectual comes from the quality of his work. There are and can be, only a few genuine opters out these days, those whose independence takes the form of a refusal to be included in the network of jobs and the 'perks' of the system and those whose eccentricities are essential to their being. Such opting out requires either the negation of material comforts or the economic support of institutions which can sustain a parallel system or, ultimately, considerable personal wealth. All the more reason then that those who are using the system should refrain from indulging in the sub-infeudation of patronage which eventually can only lead to the erosion of academic independence.

This dependence of the State on the intellectuals is also what gives the intellectual a freedom of action. The intellectual's response to the State is ultimately a matter of individual choice, social constraints notwithstanding. In periods of crisis, it is often not the social constraints which act as a lever, but the consequences of the choice. The experiences of totalitarianism in the twentieth century have demonstrated that there is in every situation scope for such a choice. This dependence also permits the intellectuals to mobilise themselves, and if need be, as commentators or critics of political action in more than just a neutral sense.

The pressures of State and society as reflected in hierarchical structures cannot be wished away or legislated away. Such changes are slow in coming and require a re-ordering of social functioning. But, with even a minimal removal of pressure, the fear of intellectual experimentation and speculation might be reduced as also the dull repetition of cliché knowledge which is sometimes mistaken for intellectual activity. In this context links with centres of excellence outside India can help diffuse some of the pressures within the country, as, indeed, the reverse has also been the case on occasion. The portmanteau of 'Oriental Studies' was often an adjunct of colonial interests and foreign policy in Europe, the Soviet Union and the United States. The recasting of these studies or their continuation in a new garb, was largely due to political changes in and among both societies.

But, admittedly, the lifting of pressures through these means is marginal. As an aspect of growing internationalism, the links among scholars in various countries will continue. This carries the danger of imported creativity and subservience to the affluent, but it also carries at the level of research the possibilities of communication through channels other than governmental and to that extent the strengthening of the independence of the academic intellectual. Beyond a limited point one cannot talk about national research and foreign research but one can refer to the ideological underpinnings of both national and foreign researchers in a particular field.

However, the use of these contacts is circumscribed since they can be discontinued by the State if it so desires. The demand that academics have to get 'political clearance' from the government before they can leave the country even for the short duration of a specialised conference, does make a mockery of international contacts. Recent cases in the last few months where individual academics have been stopped from doing research in the India Office Library in London or attending a seminar on the archaeo-

logy and early history of central Asia, because they did not get 'political clearance' is indicative of the fact that for some people in authority the Emergency has not ended.

Ultimately, whether the intellectual is working towards changing the bases of society or diversifying the mechanisms of knowledge, much of his action revolves around his political decisions. Here the pull of social background, the availability of access to ideas and the race for patronage will come into play. If there is more than just tinkering involved it needs a political perspective—political in the sense not of small-time manoeuvres for local advantages but of an awareness of the given situation and the consciousness of a direction of change. And this often determines the effectiveness of individual choice. A distinction must be made between politics *per se* and a comprehension of the political implications and uses of knowledge.

An equally important aspect of communication is not only communication among intellectuals but between them and the interested wider audience. The intellectual's concern with the application of his discoveries and research should be to ensure not only that they are not abused but also that the authentic results reach the wider audience. If the intellectual tends his academic garden and is unconcerned with the wider perspectives of his discipline he is described as failing in his social responsibility. If he relates his work to contemporary problems he is described as being 'politically' motivated.

Perhaps the dichotomy can be lessened by suggesting that the academic intellectual often expresses himself at two levels, that of 'pure' research and that of the wider generalisation. Both are equally motivated but it is argued that the motivation can be more easily contained by the methodology of the discipline at the former level and some concession to motivation is generally conceded at the latter. It is at the latter level that the application of knowledge has to be carefully watched by academics.

The distinction between the two levels is however slippery.

A confusion between the two in part accounts for some of the intellectual shoddiness of much of what is published in India these days. We have a large share of academics for whom the profession is merely a job, carrying little interest beyond the wage it earns and a minimum of intellectual concern. Such academic material easily succumbs to political pressures as for example through governing bodies of private colleges and to populist opinion as in the indiscriminate rush to have politicians inaugurate seminars on subjects about which they know nothing. All this tends to confuse the meaning of political motivation.

As academic intellectuals we derive a certain satisfaction from believing that we are detached from politics. Yet, we all reflect a political perception in our intellectual attitudes and it is this perception that we should admit to. In the past, liberalism has softened the political edges of decisions and given them the contours of seemingly pure intellectual actions.

In a liberal ethos the use of State patronage was seen as acceptable provided it did not impinge on intellectual independence. There was a complacency about guarding against State interference in the more fundamental principles of academic freedom. It was taken for granted that in a liberal regime there is a flexibility in the relations between government and intellectuals which does not require the imposition of rigid restrictions or careful vigilance. With the challenge to liberalism which militant nationalism poses, confrontations may result in sharper dissent, which one hopes will heighten the consciousness of the need for dissent and alternative systems as also the need among academics to protect the freedom of the academic intellectual. A clash between the emotive and populist articulations of militant nationalism and the search for analytical explanation may provide the lever to intellectual effort in raising it out of its complacency.

Self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity

ASHIS NANDY

THE basic values of the Indian intellectual will have to be defined as self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity. Radicalism, nationalism and the search for social relevance are at the moment of secondary importance and, I am increasingly persuaded, dangerous red herrings by themselves.

The final responsibility for meeting the three values — self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity — is that of the individual intellectual. Admittedly, these values have their social dimensions, but everyone concerned with the affairs of the mind in India must act *as if* the promotion of these values is an individual responsibility and we must judge each intellectual *as if* he were totally responsible for his actions which bear upon these values.

We must also ensure that this responsibility is not shirked by invoking the favourite psychological defences of the Indian intellectual: the concept of a forthcoming millennial revolution (which frees us in the meanwhile from the responsibility of doing anything that smacks of reformism and gives us the pseudo-responsibility of building free-masonries and cliques within the academia), the idea of a pure

Indianness (which frees us from the responsibility of handling the myriad definitions of Indianness with which the majority of the society has lived for centuries and gives us the pseudo-responsibility of disowning the fact that elements of the modern world too have now become traditional aspects of Indianness); and the idea of immediate social relevance (which frees us from the responsibility of seeing that the academically fashionable is not sold as the socially relevant and gives us the pseudo-responsibility of accepting the 'research priorities' of powerful political groups and fifth-rate academic politicians).

To translate these opaque formulations into tolerable English, unless we judge our actions in terms of the interrelated values of self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity, we shall have no check against our radicalism being in effect conservative, our nationalism becoming in effect anti-national, and our search for relevance producing vapid irrelevancies.

It is not that we have not sensed this. We have often tried to denigrate our radicals by pointing out their middle class origin, Brahminic life style and private

academic fiefs. We have tried to deflate our nationalists by pointing out how far their nationalism is bound to what they are reacting to, how much they themselves are a product of the process of westernisation in India. And we have off and on pointed out how profitable the concern with social relevance has been to many social scientists. But such debunking and counter-debunking have proceeded without any reference to the core values we are pursuing.

In the rest of this article I shall try to illustrate some of these points with reference to the raging debates on the demand for removal of three history texts from the list of prescribed readings and the aborted official jaunt of Professor R.S. Sharma to the USSR. My argument is that some sections of the Indian intellectuals have consistently invoked the State against other Indian intellectuals, that the votaries of academic freedom today are the ones who have systematically tolerated if not built the organisational means and the theoretical justifications for State interference in intellectual affairs, that dedicated cliques within the academic world have consistently tried to break the solidarity of the intelligentsia vis a vis the Indian State and, to do so, have walked the corridors of power more happily than the corridors of knowledge.

My argument is also that, to a great extent, the supporters and critics of the history texts and of Professor Sharma share many of the same orientations which have produced the present academic culture in the country and both groups are equally careless about the values which should guide intellectual activity in a society lacking in adequate safeguards against monopolistic trends within the academic power structure.

II

The demand for the removal from official reading lists of three history texts written by Professor Romila Thapar and company (falsely presented by many supporters of the authors as an attempt to ban these books) must be understood with reference to five sets of variables: the contents of the books, the

authors, the intellectual community, the government and, strange though it may seem to many, the children who are supposed to read them.

Let me make it clear at the beginning that so far as the content of these books go, I find nothing objectionable. These are by far the best history texts I have read or have been forced to read in my childhood. It has been argued that the ultimate judge of the quality of these books must be the historians. This is a foolish argument. Text books are not learned treatises; they presume an understanding of a discipline and an understanding of the students — school-going children in this case.

The second kind of understanding — that of the students — is undervalued because most of us are, in spite of our benevolent, egalitarian postures, hard-hearted fascists at home, particularly in relation to our children. I may not be competent to judge the books as works of history but, I insist, I have a right to pronounce an opinion on them as readings meant for children. But on that count too, these books seem to have done reasonably well.

Having said this, I must hasten to point out the curious fact that both parties in the debate have tried to confine themselves to the contents of the books. Why?

Now, as a psychologist, I am interested in knowing whether or not the Hindus in ancient India ate beef and how the cow gradually became a totemic animal. Nor is it trivial to me whether or not Rana Pratap was an ordinary chieftain fighting the Indian State, blown up into a national figure in recent times by the sense of inferiority of a minority of westernised urban upper caste Hindus sold to the idea of competing with the power of Islam. (Personally I like to believe that the ancient Hindus ate beef, because that gives contemporary Hindus more options and I prefer to be biased in favour of the more heterogeneous Mughal empire than the more homogenous principality of Mewar, because the complex traditions of the former are more relevant if one is searching for continuities

in Indian traditions of nationhood.) But everybody debating the texts is not a psychologist. Certainly not the authors who, I should think, would consider such issues trivial.

Nor do I believe that the authors, honest-to-God Marxists all, accept that there can be a *true* history in any ultimate sense of the term. They would be the first to admit that all histories are ideological positions. Yet they seem to operate jointly on the assumption that history is a search for an absolute truth and an absolute past, a cut-and-dried empirical venture which can some day, with improved historiography, reveal a past more concrete than the alternative pasts created by the less enlightened historians.

Why this insistence on discussing only the contents of history books? Why this anti-Marxist emphasis on a 'real' history? Perhaps the answer lies in the manner in which these history books were chosen as *official texts* in a monopolistic situation and the manner in which some people, taking advantage of the change of government at the Centre, are now trying to have a different set of official texts books in history.

Evidently, both the authors and the critics of these texts strongly believe in the role of the government in determining and propagating 'historical truths', they feel that there is nothing wrong about having official texts and that 'true' and 'good' history should triumph over the untrue and biased history of other historians. They believe not merely that all intellectual work is determined by social and political processes, but that there can be nothing wrong in giving 'official' push to historical works which support the right kind of social processes and also government-controlled NCERT and the agreeable bureaucrats called Directors of Public Instruction in the States are appropriate agencies for such intervention.

I think that between the many leftist supporters of the books and their vociferous rightist critics there is no difference so far as attitudes to intellectual autonomy go. Both groups believe in the pace-setting

the

role of the State in the academia and in the need for intellectuals to be parts of larger political groupings.¹ Both believe in extra-academically cornering academics whom they consider politically disagreeable and both have tried to silence alternative viewpoints by taking advantage of government patronage and by building organisational networks which would serve that purpose. Both are eager to have official histories and historians and to contribute their mite to that end.

There is no other explanation for the way the history text books were rammed down the throat of school teachers and students through the system of so called prescribed texts, no other explanation for the way the teachers and students of history were not allowed to choose the books they would like to use or read, and no other explanation of the attempts to confine the present debate to the truthfulness of the facts in the concerned books.

I suggest that this concentration on the contents of the books represents a joint psychological defence of both sides of the debate against any recognition of the crucial issue of the relationship between the government and the intellectuals and the central role given to the former by some sections of the latter. In this case, as in many others, we who deal with matters of mind have brought high politics into the academia; the government of India has merely obliged us by entering the world of scholarship in response to our persistent entreaties.

As the heir to the powers of the earlier regime, the present government is merely taking on the responsibility abdicated willingly by academics, including some of now-righteously-indignant-but-1-compromising authors of the

text-books. Most of them, long before the national Emergency was imposed by Mrs Gandhi, had lived happily under the Emergency in Indian higher education imposed in the early seventies by a dedicated clique.

I say this not in anger but in pain. The idea that the official text-books were written out of a sense of academic service is not supported by facts, however much the authors themselves sincerely believe so. The texts may have been, I admit, written as a social service, but by allowing them to be made prescribed or official the authors turned them into a political service. No wonder, the opponents of the books now want others to render the same political service with a new set of books. Professor Ramesh Chandra Majumdar may have become senile, but who can deny that he, when he asks the government to take steps to correct history, is the mirror image of the historians he is attacking and Professors Thapar and company are fighting in Professor Majumdar an aspect of themselves they have never disowned.

III

'On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.' Oscar Wilde.

It is the same story in the case of the government's refusal to put Professor R.S. Sharma into its official delegation to a conference in the USSR. Even though some people may not like to nurture Professor Sharma's old habit of being on official delegations, there can be no doubt that the treatment meted out to the redoubtable — and, by all accounts, professionally competent — professor has been shabby. No government has the right to determine who can go to a scholarly conference and no scholar should need a 'political clearance' from a government department.

But while witch-hunting is deplorable, it does not follow that there are no witches. And while we have the moral right, and in fact duty, to fight for Professor Sharma's rights, Professor Sharma himself has only the legal right to do so. According to his own values, he has been dealt

with rather leniently. After all, the government has accepted the 'government list' of participants prepared during the Hasan regime by Professor Sharma and dropped only the self-chosen leader of the delegation, Professor Sharma himself.

There is undoubtedly an element of poetic justice here. As a cat's paw of the educational establishment which has over the last several years systematically abridged academic freedom in this country, Professor Sharma remains a symbol of intellectual non-freedom who is trying to escape his own responsibility for what has happened to him by holding others accountable for their democratic faith. Who can deny, except those whom psychoanalyst Rollo May calls the pseudo-innocents, that Professor Sharma is one of the key persons responsible for developing and nurturing not so much a school of Marxist historians as a school of, what an observer has called, *courtier historians*.

Who gave the Government of India the right to interfere in scholarly exchanges? Who legitimised this right by quoting and misquoting 'radical' writings of the 1930s? Who created an intellectual climate within which the centralisation of intellect became a 'radical' slogan and the 'capturing' of higher education for personal gains became a legitimate 'Marxist' goal? Who thought the power of a colonial educational bureaucracy, instead of being reduced, should be augmented and used for 'progress'?

The answers would be painful for many including, of course, Professor Sharma. As his letter to the *Times of India* itself suggests, he had been instrumental in organising government-to-government relationships even in the matter of the conference to which he was to go and it was he who had arranged to have exchanges of official delegations which would be monopolised by him and his kind. It is by using his own techniques that the present government has kept Professor Sharma out.

Those who are for the autonomy of the intellectual community, including those who like me believe that the academic freedom of the

¹ This is not a plea for unlimited free enterprise in education. I recognise the intermediary role that must be played by autonomous public institutions like the UGC, ICSSR and the NCERT in our system where educational institutions are financed by public funds. But you cannot subvert the public institutions, take away their autonomy and make them subservient to powerful political cliques and at the same time expect your socialist jargon to protect you from being identified as a subverter of academic freedom.

Sharmas should be guaranteed along with that of the Khans, Hasans, Chananas and Dutts, cannot avoid the responsibility of kicking out these worthies from all decision-making bodies. But even more important for us is to first fight those techniques and organisations which the Sharmas of the country have produced for our benefit, though that fight may temporarily benefit the academic mafia which has dominated the Indian scene until now.

Let us however remember that in this case too, instead of the government first encroaching upon the domain of the intellectuals, it was a section of intellectuals which first encroached upon the freedom of other intellectuals or egged on the government to do so. As a result, recently the present education minister was in a position to ask in the Parliament an academic, Professor Vidya Prakash Dutt, where the latter had been when 230 teachers of the Delhi University were locked up without trial during the Emergency. The minister did not provide the answer which we all know: Dr. Dutt and his troupe were then applauding the government from the sidelines.

Let us not forget that long before the Emergency a section of the Indian intellectuals began to think of the government as an instrument of not only settling personal scores or academic debates, but also as a means of promoting certain academic factions and cornering academic power. It is pointless to blame the clowns of the Emergency in the academe who swaggered around so majestically only a few months back and their cleverer and more resilient bureaucratic pageboys: the Nagchaudhuris, the Parthasarathis and the Mehrotras on the one hand and the Naiks and the Bordias on the other.

The rest of us too had abdicated our responsibility much earlier. The Dutts and Khans were only taking advantage of a philosophy of higher education which had come to mean radicalism and progress, but was in effect retrogressive and obscurantist. (In this context I hold people like

Romila Thapar who had shown some courage during the national Emergency, more responsible than the lickspittles of the Emergency regime now mouthing democratic slogans. To the extent one is willing to risk one's neck, one should also have the courage to subject one's concept of evil to constant re-evaluation. Those who defied the national Emergency also had a greater responsibility to defy the educational emergency. Their feudal links and factional loyalties did not allow them to do so.)

Let me give an example. Towards the beginning of the seventies, Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, at that time a teacher at the Indian Institute of Technology at Delhi, wanted to go to the United States to attend, if I am not wrong, a seminar. While the IIT had no objection to this, education minister Dr. Nurul Hasan had. He publicly asserted his right to stop Dr. Swamy from going out. At that time neither the writer of history texts nor our new converts to academic freedom — Professors Sharma and Dutt — showed the slightest discomfort. Now, I know that the flamboyant and garrulous Dr. Swamy may not be everyone's idea of a free academic and his version of politics will not go down in history as an instance of psychological health. But Dr. Swamy's political pathology was not at stake, academic freedom was. Did anyone care? On the contrary, I found that many of my academic friends felt that the ministry, by troubling a die-hard rightist, was advancing the cause of academic freedom.

How flimsy the Right-Left dichotomy in such matters could be was soon made obvious by the manner in which some interpretations and interpreters of Marx were isolated, cornered and muted in the name of radicalism. The intellectual establishment left nobody in any doubt about what kind of ideological razor's edge they would like everyone to walk and, even more important, what kind of academic leadership one must kowtow to as an expression of one's allegiance to the correct ideological line.

The game, dear reader, had started early and the winners all

along the way were intellectuals trying to be one-up on other intellectuals by exploiting government patronage, by using politics as the basis of secret societies, by making ideological purity the indicator of a new Brahminism, and by employing slogans as a substitute for academic work. Academic leadership has never been enough for most of our academics, they have always wanted to wield power. And this without having any real sense of the majesty of power in an unorganised society. That is why, of all the education ministers we have had since independence, the three who came from the academia were the worst for the academics. They spent their time distributing petty patronage, packing educational bodies, obliging sycophants and settling personal scores.

IV

The basic needs of the Indian intellectuals, I repeat, are self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity. These needs can be met not by changing an individual here or a group there, but by making the intellectuals accountable for their academic creativity and moral stature. Such accountability is possible only if there is a multicultural, multi-ideological, open community of those leading a life of the mind. As one who delves in the affairs of the mind I am willing to learn from my teachers, colleagues and students. But I refuse to be improved by those among us who want to invoke the State to alter my perception of social reality, correct my ideological pathology or force me to accept their academic leadership.

If today some of these academic gangsters have fallen from their self-made rickety pedestals, I can only feel pity for them and be angry that before falling they have given powers to semi-literate political and bureaucratic functionaries which can be used to subvert academic freedom. That these builders and legitimisers of State power in the academia have in some cases fallen victim to their own creation is no consolation to me.

A university survey

AKHILESHWAR JHA

LIBERATION from the dictatorial Indira-Sanjay regime in March 1977, from the point of view of democratic freedom, was, in a deeper sense, of far greater significance than liberation from the British colonial rule in August 1947. Even if the British rule had continued for a few years more, it would not have destroyed democracy, the process of which had already been in operation, though within limited political freedom. There was a sense of certainty that whenever full political freedom would come, it could not but be democratic in character.

As against this, had the March 1977 elections been one in favour of the Indira-Sanjay caucus, it would have, in all likelihood, meant a total loss of democratic freedom and perpetuation of dynastic rule. What has been retrieved from the election defeat of the Indira-Sanjay caucus seemed, before the historic elections, irretrievable; whereas political free-

dom from colonial rule had begun appearing a certainty from 1942 onwards, the actual attainment and mode of it being a matter of time and mutual negotiation.

There is another vital difference between the two liberations separated by thirty years. While the 1947 liberation came largely as a result of the manoeuvrings of the Indian intellectual political leaders, the 1977 liberation came through the ballot papers of the largely illiterate, certainly non-intellectual, Indian masses. It is not the place to deal with the question of the extent or the nature of politicization of the masses as reflected by the voting pattern of the March 1977 elections. What, however, needs to be emphasized here is that, on the whole, the intellectuals of this country played a very insignificant role in the restoration of democratic freedom. In fact, by and large, they had reconciled themselves to the

Emergency regime as almost a perpetual political set-up, and had even begun to think that it was good for the country.

It is every one's knowledge that during the twenty months of the dictatorial regime, absolutely no organized resistance was put up against it in any part of the country, including West Bengal and Kerala. There were sometimes isolated, feeble voices of protest, but their tone betrayed a lack of conviction, and they passed like voices in the wilderness. No movements could have been expected to be built up in response to those voices

As time passed, and the Indira-Sanjay regime began to appear invincible and eternally entrenched in power, more and more intellectuals threw themselves abjectly at the feet of the dictators and their cohorts. Even when the elections were announced, no one, including the social science pundits, even dreamt of the defeat of the Congress, let alone of Indira Gandhi. In the worst of events, they used to condescendingly concede that the size of the Congress Party in Parliament would shrink somewhat, but it would still dominate, may be, no two-thirds, but still it would acquire an overwhelming majority.

In retrospect, it appears that more than non-academic intellectuals such as bureaucrats, lawyers, journalists, writers, and others, the Delhi University and college authorities and teachers had taken the return of Mrs. Gandhi to power for granted. This was unmistakably reflected in the way they started acting within a couple of months of the clamping of the Emergency. Elections were banned. Poses of police were placed at each corner of the campus. Stricter checks were devised to see that classes were regularly held and students attended them. Meetings were disallowed, and talking, or taking part in, politics was declared illegal.

As time passed, meetings were allowed but only to conduct statutory business, or to sing praise of the 20 Point or 5 Point programme. Political discussion was allowed but only in unqualified support to Mrs. Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi. Hoard-

ings flashing Emergency slogans, went up at the important campus bus-stops and the cross-roads. Plain-clothes policemen freely roamed about on the campus eavesdropping on conversation among teachers on the footpath, in the coffee-houses, and staff rooms. Not infrequently, they sat disguised as students in the classrooms to see if the teachers were teaching 'politics'

Did anyone among the university authorities try to resist the most nefariously calculated attack upon the autonomy of the institution? It is true that none could have done so without facing the consequences of being taken away to jail and tortured. And yet, the risk was worth taking. Maintenance of freedom to pursue knowledge and build up academic tradition of excellence, too, has a price, which must be, off and on, paid, and more frequently so in a developing society like India's.

But what is of significance is that not only did the university authorities not offer the least resistance, they, on the contrary, chose to collaborate fully with the Emergency regime and even took initiative to conduct propaganda of the ideas and values associated with the Emergency. They were, it seems now, happy with the police, the abandonment of democratic functioning, curbs on criticism of the authorities, and enforced peace on the campus. They were happy because they enjoyed wielding power for the first time without any fear of opposition or criticism. This was what the authorities applauded then as the normal functioning of the institutions of higher learning

Evidently, what they meant by 'normal' functioning was the physical presence of students in their classrooms, teachers engaging them for certain hours every day, and promotion of extra-curricular and cultural activities. The university authorities were not concerned with the quality of teaching, nor with the receptivity of students, nor, again, with the communicability of teachers. If they were, they would not have connived at the infiltration of policemen into the classrooms to keep a record of teachers who

happened to speak 'objectionable' things. An atmosphere of insecurity, suspicion, fear and veiled intimidation was allowed to prevail everywhere.

What betrayed the academic authorities more was the kind of extra-curricular activities they tried to promote both at the university and college levels. These were meticulously designed to wean the students away from *thinking* of socio-political issues and engage them in non-thinking cultural activities such as wrestling, musical evening, film-star nite, folk-dance programme, Kawwali nite, and so on. In such cultural and extra-curricular activities as essay and debate competitions where some thinking could not have been avoided, the given topics were invariably designed to elicit support for the Emergency rule and condemn all opposition to it as anti-national.

Thus the atmosphere of normalcy prevailed at the cost of destruction of precisely the very basic values which the institutions of higher learning are primarily required to promote, namely, freedom of thought and unfettered pursuit of modern knowledge.

The question that needs to be answered at this stage is, how did the university and college teachers accept such a repugnant situation? Assuming that the administrative authorities, though coming from the teaching community, were more concerned with saving their own positions by pleasing the ruling clique, how did the teachers, or, at least, a majority of them, reconcile themselves to the persistent onslaught on their professional functioning?

True, they were equally concerned with retaining their jobs and drawing their salaries, but that they could have done without being abjectly slavish to the dictates of the authorities. They could have made their resentment known in various ways such as silently withdrawing themselves from all other university and college activities except the routine work of teaching. Non-cooperation in an organized way, though apparently on an individual basis

and on different excuses, would have seived the purpose of at least registering a silent protest.

But, a majority of teachers behaved in the contrary manner. They sought the favour of the authorities by competing in the game of devising ways and means of glorifying Emergency rule. When a central minister came to preside over a function, they clamoured for the front-row seats so that they were seen by the visiting emissary and the local authorities. They turned into 'good', 'disciplined', teachers regular in taking classes and enthusiastic in organizing cultural and extra-curricular activities of the kind described above.

This leads to another question of a more fundamental nature: why did the teachers, by and large, behave in the manner they did? Was it merely for the sake of protecting their jobs? No, not really. The situation had not yet deteriorated to a stage where neutrality was considered to be equivalent to enmity. The facade of democracy was still there, and freedom of disseminating and acquiring modern knowledge was still theoretically available. But the teachers did not care to utilize even the amount of freedom still available to protest against the encroachment upon the autonomy of the institutions of higher learning.

The reason is to be found in the discrepancy of relationship at the deeper level between modern education, all the material of which is created in the European and American centres of learning, and the culturally unchanging traditional Indian society from which come the university and college teachers, and to which they remain emotionally and even intellectually, bound in their personal and social lives. Modern knowledge in different disciplines which are cultivated in a modern university is still basically alien to its teachers, it is confined to books and laboratories and has no relevance to the needs of actual, everyday life.

Most of them have taken to teaching not in consequence of having made their personal choice,

but because they found themselves unfit for other jobs with power as in government service or with plenty of money as in private commercial-business houses. Other jobs of a comparable income-range require some kind of specialized training and professional skill. But university and college teaching requires nothing of the kind. Merely a good academic record at graduate and post-graduate examinations is enough — though even this not always. As for the most fundamental requirement — an inner urge to pursue excellence in modern knowledge and have an aptitude for it — no one seems concerned except theoretically.

Since modern knowledge is not the product of the Indian society, the Indian academic intellectuals seldom feel inspired either to imbibe it or contribute some thing of their own to it. Teaching is, therefore, a duty to them which they perform in the most formal manner without getting intellectually involved in the work.

The same is true of research work. Ninety nine per cent of teachers at the university and colleges undertake to supervise or do research not because they feel impelled to add to the existing store of knowledge, but because this makes them eligible for promotion to the next higher grade. For, ultimately, in the Indian society today, the status of a man is determined by the amount of his bank-balance, his possessions (house, car, TV, fridge, imported gadgets, imported clothes, etc etc.), and by the power he has by virtue of the position he holds. The last — power — is, of course, the most coveted thing, for, if money can influence power, power can command money. Through their jobs as teachers, the university and college teachers are almost solely interested in earning money and thereby acquiring a respectable status in society.

The root of this clamouring for office with power on the part of academic intellectuals lies in their cultural heritage. Every teacher sees himself, consciously or unconsciously, in the image of a *guru*, whose authority, in the ancient India, could not be questioned by his disciples.

Besides, each *guru* regarded the other *guru* as his rival and with contempt. From these two traits is derived the power-lust of the modern academic intellectual. He wants a professorship, for example, not for the love of knowledge (and, that is why, not by virtue of his knowledge), but for the authority his word will command. A Professor aspires to become a Vice-Chancellor for the similar reason. Principalship is, for the same reason, the most prized job, for which there are always strong aspirants ready to exploit their high connections and other sources.

More often than not, favouritism is as unfailing an instrument of promotion on the campus as anywhere else. Cases of favouritism and nepotism abound here as elsewhere. Bossism prevails from the lowest level of a lecturer (over his students) to the highest level, the Vice-Chancellor. Both in appointment and promotion, the boss's will reigns supreme. While a lecturer with high academic degrees can be refused a Readership, it can be served on a platter to another who does not fulfil half of the minimum qualifications. A lecturer twice rejected as Reader can be appointed directly as a Professor. Likewise, principalship goes more by the sweet will of the higher authorities than by merit of the candidates.

Merit has always been the first victim in Delhi University and its colleges, which is, to say the least, sad, but, in the circumstances, not unnatural. Like other universities in India, Delhi University has been relying more upon the mere form than the spirit and content of modern education. And from mere form to formality is an inevitable degeneration: formality of attendance, formality of lectures and tutorials, formality of examinations and so on. The sole concern of the university is to see that the formalities have been completed, the rest has only peripheral importance.

Here again is another instance of traditional culture impeding, or corrupting, the dissemination of modern knowledge. In Indian culture, certain formal features of a man's appearance determine his

caste, community, religion, and spiritual and social status. This is true of the people of all communities living in India. Knowledge or experience (for either of which Indian social life provides little scope) does not mean much. Appearance determines the status of a man and the kind of respect he commands in the society. This trait has been transferred in India. If by observing certain formalities you are a good Hindu or a good Muslim, or a good Sikh, why can't one be a good graduate by completing certain formalities?

This dependence on formalities, instead of real education in modern disciplines, is also unavoidable in the prevailing situation in which higher education imparted at the university and college has almost no relevance to the actual living in the society which is still basically traditional in its economic structure, socio-cultural outlook, value-system, idea of happy life, and so on. Consequently, university knowledge, at best, gets completely diluted by the traditional beliefs and outlook, and, at worst, is thoroughly wasted.

And, yet, university education, since Independence, has expanded several times. In 1947, Delhi University, for example, had only three constituent colleges, today it has sixty five colleges, in addition to its own various teaching departments. There are about five thousand teachers and over sixty thousand regular students who together constitute the large academic community of Delhi University.

What has warranted this vast expansion of the University education system in Delhi? Certainly not the pressure of the society concerned with making higher modern knowledge available to a larger number of its aspiring members. Neither is our society (essentially rural based) in any way concerned with modern knowledge, nor are there enough seekers after it. Our society does not really feel the *need* of modern knowledge.

University education, therefore, has been, and still is, the sole concern of the government. Almost all universities in India are government

owned, in the sense that it has established them and it finances them, howsoever indirectly through the UGC at the Centre and other similarly constituted bodies in the States. And for the government, modern knowledge is not so important a thing except to a very limited extent and in the limited but dependable bureaucratic-technocratic section of the upper class society, what is important for it is workable education, and not the quality or the excellence of education.

Likewise, the Indian people (because of inherent cultural reasons) are not interested in modern knowledge, but in somehow acquiring a formal proof (i.e., degree certificate) of having received university education for this proof is necessary for obtaining prestigious jobs with power and money. Whether there are enough jobs does not bother the people so much who come to universities and colleges, for once formal proof is somehow obtained, some job too can be somehow obtained. Besides, there is also a kind of social prestige attached to the degree certificate in urban areas particularly in respect of marriage. In Delhi, for example, ninety five per cent of girls join colleges solely for the purpose of helping their parents to find rich or well-placed boys for them.

It is clear that public pressure on the government, either at the Centre or in the States, for establishing more colleges and more universities, is not inspired by a desire for imbibing modern knowledge, but for obtaining formal certificates of having received it. Evidently, government concedes to the pressure not for academic but political reasons: to satisfy the more vociferous and influential section of the electorates by providing it with some formalities rather than any genuine substance of modern education. This explains the apparently unwarranted increase in the number of colleges in Delhi in the last about twenty years.

Thus, politics and higher education in India have close links, first, through finances and, secondly, through the dependence of the party in power on the tradition-bound electorates who are more concerned

with formalities of university education than the substance. Since in India, all political parties essentially share this common concern with the people in general no matter which party happens to be in power, it is bound to approach the problem of higher education from the point of view of political convenience. The motto is bound to be as it has been hitherto: expand without excellence. No wonder education in India has become the handmaid of politics.

Delhi University and its colleges have an additional reason for working under political influences: that is nearness to the seat of the highest political and government powers. Ever since independence in 1947, Delhi University has been groomed to be the centre of intellectual power in the country in consonance with the capital's political power. A huge amount of money has been lavished on erecting faculty and department buildings, constructing laboratories, recruiting teachers from all over the country, and providing amenities comparable to those available in advanced countries. Specialized schools of economics and social studies and advanced centres of research in various disciplines including the natural sciences were established to promote acquiring and creating modern knowledge so that Delhi University becomes the leading university in India.

By the end of the sixties, it was clear that Delhi University's academic and scholarly record was no better than that of some of the other universities in the States. And yet the fashionable wish of the central government to have a leading centre of intellectuals persisted, out of which was born the Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1968 with the declared objective of primarily conducting research in the humanities. Till the end of 1977, JNU has produced not a single pioneering research work of a kind which would justify its existence as an exclusive, elite institution of higher research.

The failure of JNU to provide leadership in higher academic research in the humanities cannot yet be said to be complete, for a decade is not a long period for establishing intellectual leadership.

But there seem to be almost no signs of redemption for the JNU academics from the morass of the intellectual stagnation they have fallen into. As for Delhi University intellectuals, they have been wallowing in it for nearly two decades, though, all the time, quixotically believing they are advancing in the world of knowledge.

The reasons for this have not been merely the direct or indirect government control and the nature of political pressure from the people mentioned above. A more overwhelming reason lies in the very character of the academic intellectuals, which has been determined by the inherently Hindu-dominated Indian culture and the complete dichotomy between university knowledge and the actual personal-social life of Indian society.

One of the central features of the character of the Delhi academic intellectuals has been their enormous capacity for imitation of foreign intellectuals and ideas — but only the form and not the substance of them, which is in complete accord with their cultural make-up. Because of this capacity, Delhi campus intellectuals have always been swayed by those intellectual-political movements abroad which are distinguished from each other by marked external features among their adherents.

Since, generally, these have been movements of Left ideologies led by different intellectuals in different countries of Europe and America, Delhi intellectuals have divided themselves in groups, each after a particular intellectual fashion abroad Marx, Lenin, Mao, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, Marcuse, — name any of the Left ideological intellectuals, and he has a following on the campus, even if it consists of half a dozen or even less. Before the Emergency was clamped down, slogans from Mao's Red Book and quotations from Lenin and Che Guevara were written all over the campus, including the footpaths and the roads. The academic intellectuals fashioned their dress, eating habits, reading habits (if any), speech styles and mannerisms after their adop-

ted ideological leaders. They seemed to breathe social revolution, though themselves enjoying elite amenities.

And these ideological intellectuals did, and still do, constitute the elite of the academic community, who profess to have no faith in the existing academic system. The mass of teachers, however, are not swayed by ideologies; they regard teaching as their prescribed job for earning money and remain unconcerned with the substance or the excellence of modern education. They quietly obey the prescribed rules and regulations, and keep their bosses in good humour for obtaining easy promotions etc.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the politicians in power have always tried to exploit the situation on the campus for their own ends. And since the primary concern of the academic intellectuals has not been the dispassionate pursuit of modern knowledge but personal gain, it has been easy for the politician in power to use some of the ambitious ones among the teachers for political purposes.

All this should help explain why the academic intellectuals in Delhi did not raise a strong voice of protest during the period of the Emergency, and why, as time passed, they increasingly began collaborating with the dictatorial regime. Since they had never been aware of the value of thinking, let alone free-thinking, they did not realize the loss of it in the least. For, all the formalities of higher education, which to them have been all that higher education means, were still there. In fact, the Emergency measures on the campus were designed to strengthen those formalities, so that the substance could be modified according to the needs of dictatorial rule. A large number of the campus intellectuals, used to accepting the formal as the real, were taken in by this insistence on the completion of formalities and openly voiced their support of the measures.

It was made clear to all that what was first required of the aca-

demic intellectuals was to keep aloof from opposition politics and keep to their formal academic duties. What was more desirable was that they should support the official economic and political programmes and disseminate them among the students. Those who chose to do so were officially acclaimed as distinguished intellectuals, no matter how much they neglected even their academic formalities. Political allegiance to the Indira-Sanjay clique thus came to be the measure of academic distinction, and a large number of the intellectuals tried to earn this distinction.

The campus had always been the seat of idle political ideologists, and the central leaders had always tried to promote their own henchmen — but only indirectly and secretly. Therefore, political domination of the university during the Emergency was not in itself unprecedented. What was new was the elimination, under display of threat, of the functioning of all ideological groups, and the establishment and promotion of one group only which worked openly for the acceptance of the Indira-Sanjay dictatorship by the academic community.

This group, which had never before dared to come into the open on the campus, worked with a sense of vengeance during the Emergency. Taking full advantage of the situation, it tried to eliminate all other ideological groups among the academic intellectuals. In any case, these groups — ranging from ultra-Marxist to Hindu nationalist — had already ceased functioning and disintegrated. Quite a few of their members turned out to be supporters of the Indira-Sanjay rule. Others, the more staunch ones, withdrew themselves from political activities in despair and had begun to reconcile themselves to the situation. Then came the March 1977 elections, and the amazing, unexpected, results restoring democratic freedoms to the academicians.

One expected that after the experience of the Emergency, the

academic intellectuals would naturally do a little bit of honest heart-searching and would conscientiously conduct themselves in a manner that would render any future encroachment upon academic freedom extremely more difficult for any future government. Such a thing, unfortunately, has not happened. What is worse, from the Vice-Chancellor down to a young lecturer, no one really has felt the need of any heart-searching or a collective resolve to protect the real autonomy of the university community. Within less than a year's time, the members of this community are back to the pre-Emergency ideological-political games. The *status quo ante* on the campus is so complete that the Emergency does not seem to have ever occurred, except at times only as a half remembered dream.

In bringing about this situation, the central leaders of the new political party have made their substantial contribution. In Indian society, the pattern of functioning of the politicians at the top positions of power sets the manner of functioning for other social, educational and cultural institutions. Had the academic intellectuals sensed that the new government was essentially different from the previous one, or that it really meant to overhaul the academic machinery and education system so as to weed out the elements which openly collaborated with the Emergency rule for their own petty gains, they would probably have conducted themselves differently. But, by now they are convinced that the new leadership, in its style of functioning, is not essentially different from the old, except during the last two years of the latter's reign.

About a year of Janata rule has only highlighted its inability to evolve a comprehensive and convincing national policy in any sector including higher education, and to forge a programme of action involving all sections of the people in the country. Instead, it has set about creating an unreal but attractive image of its own through words, words and words, and in this game it is enticing the intellectuals, in-

cluding those on the campus, in the same manner as the Indira government used to do before.

To take but one example Not long after the formation of the Janata Government at the Centre, it was announced that the government had decided to send a delegation of intellectuals abroad to explain the great significance of the Janata victory. The news came as a surprise to most democratic-minded liberal intellectuals who had seen during the Emergency many intellectuals' delegations going from place to place both inside and outside the country on the mission of inculcating into people's minds the idea of how good and benevolent the dictatorial regime was. Was the Janata Government, they wondered, going to depend for its image similarly on propaganda rather than firm, meaningful and decisive action?

Fortunately, however, the move was dropped. Nevertheless, it left behind a lurking suspicion that like the Indira Government, perhaps, the Desai Government, too, was going to patronise, directly or indirectly, a select band of academic intellectuals who would be only too eager to gather blind support for any government policy. In other words, it pointed to an ominous possibility of the growth, once again, of another caucus of official intellectuals on the campus

Unfortunately, there are ample indications that such a possibility does really exist. Just to mention one here a rough survey of the chief guests and chief speakers invited to the various extra-curricular functions at the colleges and university departments in recent months reveals that almost 99 per cent of them have been central ministers and influential M.P.s of the ruling party. When the same persons were out of power, they used to bitterly criticize Congress Ministers coming to inaugurate or preside over the college and university functions. But, once in power, they have started playing the same game.

It is clear that most of the guilty-minded university and college high officials, stricken with the fear

of falling from grace in the eyes of the central leaders in government, are out to placate them by humouring their vanity and extract from them assurances of protection just in case inquiries have to be instituted under pressure to go into the complaints of irregularities and political favouritism in the functioning of these institutions of higher learning during the Emergency.

That the same set of high officials which had tried to destroy academic and intellectual freedom on the campus during the Emergency is going strong even today only suggests that their strategy has not failed. The deal that seems to have been struck is, give us (the academic officials) protection, and we pledge ourselves to serve the new government unquestioningly. Already in matters concerning general administration, various appointments, study leave and so on, those having links of one kind or the other with one or the other central leader are reported to have been readily favoured. Thus a new collusion is taking shape on the campus with new constituents but in the same old form and with the same old objective of vitiating the atmosphere of free thinking and free academic pursuit.

So far as the functioning of the various ideological groups is concerned, the situation at the moment is still very fluid. Roughly, the picture, though still hazy, can be described thus: the erstwhile supporters of Indira's Emergency regime are now turned into supporters of Indira minus her Emergency regime, the responsibility for which they put squarely on Sanjay and his cohorts. They have often gone to the extent of supporting the demand for inquiry into the Emergency excesses on the campus, and it is not surprising that with the central leaders dithering on the issue, their support has become more vociferous in recent months. For, these teachers — all belonging to NFT — are shifting the entire blame on to the shoulders of the vice-chancellor and the principals.

Jana Sangh oriented teachers are now playing the same role as the Congress-minded teachers did

before: to justify all policies of the government. For their own ends, they are interested in maintaining peace on the campus at any cost, even at the cost of forgiving the guilty ones of the Emergency days. Underneath, however, their interest does not lie in maintaining peace as such, or peace for the sake of fostering healthier academic pursuits. They want peace for two reasons: (a) not to add to the embarrassment of the Jana Sangh dominated central government, and, (b) to work for the expansion and stabilization of the Jana Sangh ideology among teachers and students with the connivance of, or in collusion with, the higher university and college authorities.

The CPI, at present, has an extremely meagre following on the campus. It was larger before the Emergency, but the Emergency exposures carrying the stories of their betrayal have damaged their standing incalculably. Some still are occupying high academic posts, but are ashamed of owning up their CPI political ideology. Through the Emergency they had identified themselves so completely with the Indira group that they find it now much too embarrassing to claim their separate identity.

The CPM, on the other hand, has emerged from the Emergency with a good deal of credit, though the numerical strength of the party members and sympathizers remains unchanged. If anything, it may have decreased; for, many of those who were sitting ideologically on the fence have chosen to move in sympathy toward the Jana Sangh rather than the CPM. But the CPM is concentrating, as always, more on the younger members of the teaching community, and wisely so, because of the natural proclivity of immature minds to believe in the apparently logical explanation of all social, economic, political and cultural problems that Marxism claims to offer.

But CPM intellectuals on the campus are divided into small factions, often secretly at war with one another. Among the factions, the strongest, (though certainly not the largest) and the most vocal is

the CPM-L, or the Naxalite, as popularly known. With the restoration of democratic freedoms, after many years of hiding and underground activities, the Naxalites are now moving about in the open and participating in the teachers' movement both at the college and university level. They are doing this not as a unified organization, but each in his or her own individual capacity. Their internal dissensions persist and, paradoxically enough, are even widening in the atmosphere of freedom. Nevertheless, they are taking advantage of the new situation by trying to iron out their factional differences and disseminate their philosophy of violence among the impressionable young teachers and students.

Like other political parties in India, the Naxalites too have learnt nothing from the Emergency, but evidently for tactical reasons, they profess to be staunch supporters of civil liberties. It is ironic that the PUCL, founded by Jayprakash Narayan and nursed by V.M. Tarkunde and others, is now being dominated, at least on the Delhi University campus, by the Naxalite radicals who believe in anything but civil liberties. Evidently, under the cloak of democratic freedom, they are trying to reorganize themselves for another romantic adventure in cruelty and violence.

But on the campus all ideologies have come to acquire romantic charms and flourish more in the imagination than the actual life of their adherents who remain basically traditionally Indian. They play with ideologies for ultimate personal gains in terms of the position, power and pelf, all three in Indian society often going together.

Meanwhile, what has suffered, and continues to suffer, most is what the university and colleges are primarily meant for: dissemination, preservation and creation of modern knowledge in various disciplines. This is, however, not very surprising in a society which continues to be basically backward-looking, rural-based and traditional in outlook, and which, consequently, finds no real use for modern knowledge.

Books and book-makers

BADAL MUKHERJI

'Intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers'.

— H. Marcuse, 'One-dimensional man'

'We would not like the government to interfere directly with the functioning of university' — Gajendragadkar Committee Report (1971)

'While the Brahman is spiritually and absolutely supreme, he is materially dependent; while the king is materially the master, he is spiritually subordinate'.

— Louis Dumont, 'Homo Hierarchicus'.

INTELLECTUALS all over the country are hotly debating the government's move to delete from high school reading lists four texts on Indian history written by Amalesh Tripathi, Barun De, Bipan Chandra, R.S. Sharma and Romila Thapar. We watched some very impressive and/or noisy seminars in Delhi last month in which eminent historians who by and large approved the government decision, participated. From casual observation it seems that the wider public that is so keenly following the debate generally falls into four categories depending on (a) whether they are historians or not and (b) whether they have read the books in question or not. It is likely, however, that which category one belongs to must

materially affect the kind of intelligent contribution one can make to the debate.

There are two running themes that are being continuously mixed up — value of research (was Gandhi a Hindu nationalist?) and the role of the State in education, and it is important to remind ourselves that Oppenheimer was not a bad physicist because he put together a little atom bomb. As a non-historian involved in the business of education, I must insist upon the right of the professional historian to both decide upon what is good history and what is not and to assert that this judgment is a professional one which cannot be evaluated in a newspaper or a public meeting. The refusal to accept this right in India today only reflects upon the general discount placed on the academic profession and leads to academic disaster, for example, like placing some individuals beyond the historian (Gandhi, Shivaji, Stalin in pre-1953 Russia) or like putting an academic in the dock for his intellectual position.

By the same logic, it is equally demeaning for either the authors of those four texts or their defenders to take cover behind the peculiar nature of the subject by declaring

that all history is subjective and hence they are not guilty of any misrepresentation. As a non-historian, this would seem to me to be a denial of the subject itself, an invitation to chaos, on top of being downright diabolical in passing on to school children something that you publicly acknowledge to be only your own special opinion. I wonder if I have more respect for the Indian historian than he has for himself.

I shall refrain from passing any judgment in this article on any of the books that require specialist knowledge of the subject. I shall instead address myself to the not unrelated question of how the matter could come to pass at all and to bringing up some issues about the business of education generally. I am concerned with Dumont's Brahmin who is used by the politician to manipulate public opinion and subvert intellectual freedom as Marcuse fears. You do not discuss in public meetings (as our historians and politicians are doing) nationalism as a false-consciousness or subjectivism in historiography. The public side of the debate can be concerned only with procedural issues — who selected the team of writers? What were the terms of their contract? Did the texts go to any other professionals for independent judgment? How is it that in our country over and over again if politician X is in power then his buddies get all the goodies and if politician Y is in power, then his? Are the examinations such that the student cannot afford to go beyond those texts or can a teacher honestly disagree without his students getting victimized?

The procedural rules play the vital role in the control of education generally for, as I intend to show later, education has been under an Emergency long before June 1975 and continues to do so today so that some bureaucrats and politicians can (and do) decide who will teach what, from which source and how. The Janata Government seems to have missed out that university teachers continue to be bound by codes of conduct laid down during the Emergency which would make Orwell envious.

I do not know which is nationally more humiliating—the act of the politician or the acceptance of it by us, the teachers. The historians have got one chance to say 'this is history, this is right. To hell with it if you don't like it and do not ask us to write any books ever again'. If you now ally yourself with those who gave us the code of conduct because you think that the present government is, let us say, reactionary then you irredeemably compromise your academic stature with political expediency. The Brahmin has then himself devalued his own worth and the king will doff his clothes without batting an eyelid.

The process of internalizing the intellectual in politics has been going on for a very long time in India. The typical model is to get experts to work on a committee for the government and then for the government to decide about what to do with the report. If the report is criticized, then the parties have a double alibi for one another; the politician accuses the intellectual and vice versa. Nehru made P.C. Mahalanobis an economist providing generations of politicians and economists to come with an indestructible punching bag (or two). The word is out now that huge research grants and other patronages and privileges are available for the right kind of expertise, and the experts themselves seem to feel no need to address themselves to, let alone explain, the starkly differing intellectual positions that they take up on fundamental issues.

It is as if Gandhi can be a Hindu nationalist or not depending upon the party in power; food zones are or are not necessary depending upon who the minister is. The intellectual position of one academic seems to be totally impervious to that of a fellow academic but quite accurately in line with that of the politician. This tends to generate the party ideologue and split up the academic community into hostile 'camps' where there is dialogue across those 'camps' and outstanding minds get surrounded by intellectual riff-raff within them, usually to the detriment of the latter.

The procedural issues having been decided in camera, the merit of a particular theory is being discussed amongst the mob whereas just the opposite should happen. This is precisely the atmosphere in which dark and damaging suspicions about personal gains and the buddy system grow, suspicions which no matter how baseless do untold damage to the already discredited academic profession.

The pity of the situation is that the best of the academics, having operated through the political process, now feel restrained and hesitant in throwing their academic weight behind their views when a new set of politicians gets the courage to judge the merit of a piece of research; instead, they appeal to the mass media and the mob against State interference in education. Paul Samuelson once said that if 600 million Chinese say that the labour theory of value is right, that does not make it right for him but if they believe in Marxism then that makes Marxism important for him. The Brahmin who is ignorant of his society is just as vulnerable as the one who indiscriminately chooses his patron.

Let me conclude this part by pointing out that civil law, as practised in most democracies, predates the emergence of mass communications media and is often caught unawares. Monumental examples can be given from the USA, the most information-intensive country where juries have often to be isolated and quarantined from the effect of newspapers and the TV! Punishment and acquittal are fundamentally affected by the mass media, pre-empting the action by competent professionals; convicted trade unionist Jimmy Hoffa shook hands with President Nixon over the TV and became a hard hat hero. Now, in a country where investigative newspaper reporting is abysmally poor, actually non-existent, it becomes all the more possible to use newspapers to convict or acquit, to condemn or exonerate.

The manner in which the present controversy came about and is being

pursued is likely to cloud some of the related points about the involvement of the State in education. In fact the four texts are high school texts written by historians of renown and commissioned by the NCERT as early as 1971. The variance of teaching standards and books used in schools and colleges is simply appalling and good texts, cheaply priced, might be the only means of exposing countless millions of young boys and girls to the best minds in the land. The only general qualification about the contents that I can think of is that whereas in higher studies or research one generally concentrates on the less known or the controversial, in high school texts there is some reason to emphasize the simple and the general and very clearly delineate what is controversial.

The role of the State in school education in India has been, in fact, far less than adequate. If you do not agree, please spend a day in the nearest corporation school. The seriousness of the need for quality control is a very, very under-appreciated problem.

Higher education at the university level, however, is an altogether different story. I am discussing below in detail the all pervasive nature of the State's involvement but first let me take up a very common format in which the problem is often posed: should the State control higher education or not? This sounds very similar to asking whether education be nationalized or not and let me submit that to even pose the problem in terms of such a clear cut choice between red and white is dangerously unrealistic and is part of the reason why the intellectual community gets split up into hostile blocs as we suggested earlier.

The State *will* be involved in education in a poor country if for no other reason than simply due to the need for financing it. But in a situation where either nationalization or free enterprise ends up in a small coterie of individuals controlling higher education, nothing will do, short of a very clear cut and meticulous statement of the

degree and kind of State regulation contemplated and continuous vigilance over it by some body other than the executive arm of the government. This in fact is a harder task than committing oneself to either of the extremes, for it requires sustained attention. The existing state of affairs could come about mainly because the so-called apolitical academic community failed to provide that sustained scrutiny over the blackmailing executive.

The first requirement of the day is that the absolute control of the politician and the bureaucrat over higher education must go. What do I mean by absolute control? It is difficult to decide upon where to begin and I shall first discuss the kind of rules that have got some publicity and then take up those that have not, and, in my judgment, are far more serious.

(a) Under the law, a foreign scholar no matter of how great a standing (Sakharov? Jan Tinbergen?) cannot be invited to give a lecture or a seminar without the approval of the ministry of education. The other side of the coin is even more imaginative — under the law an Indian cannot *receive* such an invitation. Say you opened your morning mail and found that an ignorant foreign institution asked you to attend a conference. You should immediately take it to the department of education, apologise for receiving such an absurd letter and ask the clerk what to do. If the ministry so chooses it will (i) clear you (ii) recommend someone else (it has in fact happened) or (iii) do nothing. This is what held up Prof. R.S. Sharma — it is perfectly 'legal'. These laws long predate the Emergency of 1975.

(b) But these are merely the tips of the iceberg which happened to have caught the periscope. All appointments and all teaching in universities *can* be controlled by the government. This requires a little explaining. Every university has a 'Visitor' (capital V) who is the President of India for central government universities and the Governor of State for State universities. If, by chance, dear reader,

you did not know of this, please make it a point to pick up the Gajendragadkar Committee Report of 1971 (published by the U.G.C.) which forms the backbone of university administration all over India and have a look at Part I, Chapter 3 and you will begin to see what remains of academic freedom once the Visitor and the U.G.C. are through with the university.

Here I shall but give a sample. Chapter 3 opens with the merry reassurance quoted in the beginning that the Committee 'would not like the government to interfere *directly* with the functioning of a university', and goes on to say that the Visitor, when 'satisfied' (we are not told how) that it is necessary, can 'cause' an '*inspection to be made by such person or persons as he may direct the university, colleges or institutions connected with the university, its buildings, laboratories, records and equipments, conduct of examinations, teaching and other work, .. administration and finance of the university*'. But this was not enough for these are all institutional enquiries and hence the Committee next takes up individuals. If the Visitor hath so 'caused' an enquiry committee to so enquire '*it should be left to the Committee to decide whether or not ... the representatives of the university and of the other parties interested in the enquiry should be allowed to be present during hearings of the enquiry*' (p. 31-32, italics mine). Suppose a Vice-Chancellor's report 'satisfies' the Visitor that it is time to cause an enquiry into how a lecturer performs his duties. The entire weight of the State can be thrown behind such an enquiry without the lecturer even being allowed to be present at the hearings. Would Mr. Gajendragadkar like to be in the position of that hopeless lecturer (grade Rs. 700-1600)?

(c) Practically all the money that the university uses is now routed through the U.G.C. and hence in exercising its supervisory rights the U.G.C. wields nearly unlimited power over the institution. There is virtually no supervision at all, however, of how the U.G.C. acts. Who is the U.G.C. accountable to? The

Big Brother — who else, but certainly not the teachers whom it rules. Here is again a quotation from the Gajendragadkar Committee Report (published by the U.G.C.) 'The Commission (i.e., U.G.C.) must act as a guide, philosopher and friend of the university system and as such it is the custodian of the university autonomy'. (Part I, page 15).

May be the code of conduct or the arrest of teachers and students during the Emergency was the custodian's idea of university autonomy. One did not hear very much of the custodian in those days any way. The average university teacher does not once in his career meet, in an individual capacity, those who appoint him or decide upon the terms and conditions of his work. On top of it comes the set of rules I described in (b) above to handle the truant or the deviant. This arrangement is an entirely unacademic one and so is therefore its reaction, which is the politicization of the teaching staff. The only time I had an opportunity to see (not talk to) Professor Mehrotra, the Vice-chancellor of Delhi University, was when we marched on his office for civil rights early in 1977.

I can think of some very different kinds of reasons why such rules and regulations were either laid down or accepted by eminent individuals.

(i) Complete and utter contempt for the average university or college teacher of both the administrators and the more eminent intellectuals who do not anticipate to have to face any personal difficulties.

(ii) Money. Universities are run by public funds and hence the government, as the agent of the public, must 'manage' them properly. This is the substantive justification of such rules which implies that in a poor country education must be to some extent a 'State subject'. What does not necessarily follow is that the executive arm of the government must be the agent of the agent in supervising the use of these public funds. There must be supervision but there must also be insulation from the bureaucrat and the politician I can think of no

other body even remotely as competent to do the job as the judiciary, but the pandits seem never to have even considered the possibility. Why cannot the Visitor be a nominee of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? I submit that the supervisor public funds had better be someone who does not stand to gain at election time from whether the Hindus ate beef or not in 2000 B.C.

(iii) Power An academic who is at present in favour of the government, can in effect command an extent of influence in the academic community which he could not otherwise dream of.

(iv) The latent psychological authoritarianism of an intellectual elite. The religious idea that the Brahmin is supreme in the spiritual business has its counterpart in the psychology of the individual member of the intelligentsia — the will to rule and the frustration of inaction. Here let me briefly summarize and extend a little Lewis Fever's superb analysis in *Marxism and the Hegemony of the Intellectual Class*. 'The thinking that does not culminate in action' writes Fever, 'is from the biological standpoint, a psychological anomaly ... The frustration of the intellectual breeds its counterpart of heightened aggressive energy ... The intellectual then tends to dictatorial, impatient and ruthless modes of action'. Such intellectual movements invariably tend to be intolerant and authoritarian. They also tend to be dominated by a super-ego personality, a father figure. 'The bookish boy, the "sissy" the "feminine" man finds in the struggle of ideas his manhood as others did in physical conflict', but always under pressure to prove this manhood. In poor countries this authoritarian tendency is heightened due to the vast gap between ideas and the reality outside and the perpetual threat of economic deprivation.

In the Indian context, one has to add to this the peculiar heritage of Brahminic tradition whereby the king as the patron is an accepted if not acclaimed model. This frees the intellectual of even a theoretical

responsibility of assimilating or explaining his position. In the reflected power of the king's patronage he finds the release for his inability to act and the authoritarian urge.

Please realise that these rules are never very openly invoked. They hang there like Damocles' sword — to be utilized to warn the nonconformist. Early in 1974, a Government of India under-secretary had the audacity to write that universities 'belong to' the government sector. No wonder, therefore, that people with no qualification whatsoever decide who is to attend which conference and read what paper, or which books students should or should not read. The insult to the profession is matched only by the figure of the intellectual either accepting those rules or explaining historiography to a howling mob. First, the laws were quietly amended to handcuff the Brahmin to the chariot; next the Brahmin bit the dust and blessed the wheel. The historian of the future has his work cut out for him.

In conclusion, let me state that I am not trying to construct an apologia for non-involvement, the apolitical intellectual. I am, rather, trying to describe the quagmire into which the Indian intellectual has got himself by trying to remain apolitical and then, as it were, by backing into politics. This keeps low personal opportunity costs but also destroys credibility. The world has, after all, witnessed intellectuals disappear into Siberia or die in Mexico, students who killed a Tsar in Moscow or paid in blood for their convictions on the streets of Calcutta. You may not believe their ideas but if the question of personal courage or integrity is raised, just stay very, very quiet. Politics killed four text books, politics also killed the draft Fifth Plan. How come nobody is worried about the second murder — is that politics too? I cannot fail to wonder. In a country staring fascism in the face the time for convenient defences is up. The Brahminic tradition and individual talent seem to be making contradictory claims — and history alone will exonerate the courageous.

Books

LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH ASIA, edited by B.N. Pandey. Vikas, New Delhi, 1977

THE product of a conference on leadership and socio-political change in South Asia held in London in 1974, the book under review brings together essays on the subject by an impressive array of British, American, continental and a few Asian scholars. Four main questions have been posed: What are the essential attributes of leadership? Why is a leader a leader? What are the unique features of South Asian leadership? And, lastly, what is the value of a study of leadership for our understanding of the process of social and political change in South Asia?

Altogether, twenty-nine articles are presented under four sections entitled spheres of leadership, local and provincial leadership, leadership of political parties and emergence and style of leadership. Several interesting pieces are included in the collection.

D.N. Panigrahi's 'Peasant Leadership' is a study of the peasant movement organized by Kisan Sabhas in the taluqdari regions of Oudh during the non-cooperation movement of 1920-21. The results of his enquiry show the limitations of the elite conflict model that seeks to explain social mobilization in terms of conflict between the entrenched and the emerging elites. The movement and the turmoil and violence that followed it were not the result of conflict between new elites — the professional classes and lawyers — and traditional elites, the zamindars and the taluqdars. The protest movements, and the spirit of nationalism involving organizational activities within a primarily peasant society, elections and various forms of conflict were part of the dynamics of a larger process of change that extended far beyond the narrow confines of the elite conflict model.

T.G.B. Spear's 'Patterns of British Leadership', analyses the judicious mixture of pragmatism and paternalism that constituted British administrative style. In 'Change with Stability the Chief Minister's Burden', P.V. Narasimha Rao gives a candid account of the manipulation, exchange of favours and severe political constraints that characterize the office of the Chief Minister, and shows how their collective impact inhabits the possibility of radical change. This is a matter of great concern to those who are interested in promoting socio-economic change because in our federal polity, the Chief Minister alone can provide the initiative and leadership for successful implementation of the national plans.

The article on 'Indian Socialist Movement' by Paul R. Brass presents the thesis that the movement disintegrated primarily because of a national power struggle among the various socialist factions. It is an interesting departure from the usual practice of describing such conflicts either in terms of personal conflicts of an idiosyncratic nature or appeals to vaguely formulated ideologies. Manoeuvres at the leadership level can, however, give only a partial account of success and failure of the socialist movement in India. Perhaps, inclusion of some parameters of the larger political system, especially the implications of the elite mass gap in the electorate for the party system in general will improve the depth and power of the explanation provided by the author.

It is not possible here to discuss every single article separately; suffice it to say that most of them are written quite well and make for stimulating reading. The volume as a whole, however, fails to give a coherent and complete perspective to the study of leadership and the process of social and political change in South Asia.

On the face of it, the problems with the volume appear to be organisational. In a way, it is easy to understand the predicament of a harassed editor trying to find common ground among a group of specialists operating in their chosen fields. The arrangement of the material does not follow any logical unfolding of the theme. The four sections are neither comprehensive in their coverage of the respective general areas nor do they complement one another towards building up a more precise understanding of the problems that South Asian leadership confronts. But the more serious problem that keeps the book from breaking new ground is the absence of a theoretical perspective on the problem of leadership and change.

A more systematic treatment would have required a precise demarcation between the analytical and empirical aspects of leadership. What is the status of leadership as an explanatory category? Is it, as the orthodox proponents of dialectical materialism would have it, a null category? Or is it, like in the neo Weberian usage of charismatic leadership, a full-fledged explanatory variable by itself? Or, is it, à la Sartre, a residual category, ('Men make history within limits imposed by history').

The five 'models' of leadership presented by Spear: the natural, the charismatic, the rational, the leader of consensus and the leadership of force do not come

to grips with this fundamental question at all. Leadership of force is the least satisfactory of the five. It begs the question more than it answers. Does leadership flow from the mastery over force or does force flow from an undisputed leadership? What we need is a general theory of collective action which in specific situations, provides the rationale for collective effort towards the attainment of community goals. Leadership originates in the ability to provide this rationale and the ability to inculcate the norms stating the goals and the strategy and tactics in the followers and the creation of an organization that links them with the leaders through an hierarchy of roles.

Duncan Derret comes close to this position in his definition of innovatory leadership as 'any person who sets a fashion, whose outlook consistently receives thoughtful approval, who has an identifiable effect on his age and in a sense, marks it as his own.' Unfortunately, rather than working towards a general theory, he gets into a specific case to illustrate his conjecture. This hardly helps understanding to cumulate.

The fundamental problem facing the leadership in South Asia today is to devise a path to bridge the twentieth century world with that of their own which lies at various stages of development. And this the leader has to achieve with little or no help from others in the similar predicament and often in the face of active resistance from the developed world.

Unlike the leaders of the Arab world, the South Asian leadership does not enjoy the luxury of delinking development from redistribution of privileges. Experience demonstrates that though various forms of authoritarianism have cropped up in parts of South Asia in the past and have sought to draw their justification in terms of their ability to cut through the morass of economic stagnation, they have fallen a prey to the subcontinental malaise of corruption of ideals.

Politically, then, which kind of leadership, keeping in view the specific social and economic structures of South Asia, is most likely to succeed? What we need here is a general treatment of the problem, building on the various national experiences rather than the fragmentary and partial exercises undertaken in this volume.

Even the Indian parts of the volume hardly provide any original insights into the political or developmental dimensions of leadership. Miriam Sharma reports that 'the new leader — the *bara admi* — has a caste status, is relatively wealthy, and according to his followers, he has the ability to control other men and resources by sheer power, force and deceit.'

This profile of the rural leadership, so far as this reviewer is concerned is true to life but it has been reported so often that by itself it does not bear

repetition. Instead, one would like to move on to the more interesting question of the problems that the leadership faces in trying to generate support at the grass roots level for national political programmes for a more just and affluent society. But generating such support, precisely because of the structure of power relations that operate within and around our political institutions, is likely to be an uphill task. We have this from a practising politician. '... the most important obstacle to the implementation of the radical programme of socio-economic reconstruction is the elitist power base of Congress Party and in fact of all the political parties in India, whether of the left or of the right.' (Narasimha Rao, p. 287). This is where lies the rub of development and the role that our present leadership is likely to play in it.

The relegation of the bulk of the subcontinent down into the status of the 'fourth world' in the wake of the oil crisis only prominently displayed a trend that has been in operation for quite some time. In terms of technology, standards of living and other areas of excellence, the subcontinent has been hitherto a vast sinking landmark as compared to the rest of the world. Coupled with that are the growing disparities within the region and the growing rejection by the populace through ballot or otherwise of the established orders and political institutions. The domain of the volume is thus a vast problem ridden populace seething with discontent that is quite out of tune with the placid and non-committal tone of the book.

Taken individually the volume contains several fine pieces. To name only a few, Nossiter's 'Communist Leadership in Kerala: The Business of the Many, the Art of the Few' is charming and instructive. Stanley Wolpert's 'Congress Leadership in Transition: Jinnah To Gandhi, 1914-1920', is provocative. 'Perhaps the most ironic aspect of the Jinnah-Gandhi turn-about in Congress leadership,' Wolpert remarks, 'was the unrelenting religiously provincial character of Gandhi's "secular" leadership, and the consistently secular national quality of Jinnah's communalism.' This is quite likely to be controversial, like the author's earlier work, *Nine Hours to Rama*. However, in terms of general understanding of the problems that leadership in South Asia faces, the book remains a bag of chips waiting for a master craftsman.

Subrata Kumar Mitra

PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES—I:
HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS, edited by B. De.
Published for the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, by Oxford University Press, 1977.

THE Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, founded less than five years back, has already earned considerable scholarly renown through its seminars and Occasional Papers. *Perspectives in Social Sciences*.

its second major publication venture after *Problems of Economy and Planning in West Bengal* (1975), is certain to add to its growing reputation. The five papers included in this volume come from scholars trained in a number of disciplines. (Political Science, Economics, Ancient Indian History, Modern History, Management Studies) and tackle a rich variety of subjects European diplomacy (Dr. Partha Chatterji) Tipu Sultan's Mysore (Prof. Asok Sen), temple-building in medieval Bengal (Dr. Hiteshranjan Sanyal), the validity of the much used 'renaissance model for 19th century Indian history (Prof. Barun De) and rural town development in modern Bengal (Dipesh Chakrabarti). Yet certain underlying unities are always evident, springing from the interdisciplinary approach common to all the contributors, and bearing upon a number of themes extremely relevant for social scientists in India today — and by no means just for them alone.

Partha Chatterji's paper makes a bold frontal attack on conventional diplomatic history with its obsession with minutiae of wars, alignments and treaties explained essentially in terms of individual decision-making by 'great' or inept statesmen and particular governments. Such an approach, he points out, cannot adequately explain the structural shift in international politics at the end of the 19th century from balance of power to imperialism — from a regime marked by basic equilibrium between relatively equal actors whose occasional limited wars invariably ended without eliminating any party, to an age of arms race culminating in total war in 1914. The earlier, post-Westphalian system rested on certain 'structural, technological and ideological conditions' which were gradually eroded in course of the 19th century. Above all, the classic balance of power system 'was maintained by periodically adjusting any imbalances by equitably compensating all the core powers out of peripheral territories' — Poland and the Balkans for the feudal monarchies, overseas colonies for the mercantile powers. The 18th century partitions of Poland are thus shown by Dr. Chatterji to be not aberrations but 'a rather dramatic example of the essential logic of the classical balance of power system'. The growth of national movements increasingly rendered the first safety-valve difficult to operate while the exhaustion of the colonial reservoir finally created 'a zero-sum situation', making world war inevitable. There can be little doubt that such an overall approach to international politics opens up perspectives unknown to conventional diplomatic history. A cynic might conceivably argue, however, that Althusser and the game theory were perhaps not all that indispensable for making a point essentially made already by Lenin, and that the exclusion from Dr. Chatterji's model of 'the process by which decisions are made on behalf of a nation' — internal developments in other words — leaves the break with orthodox diplomatic history a little incomplete.

Temple-building in Bengal from the 15th to the 19th century is a brilliantly original, major contri-

bution to the social history of art which deftly avoids the opposite dangers of simplistic reduction of cultural forms to socio-economic changes and their study in total and abstract isolation. The core of Hiteshranjan Sanyal's paper is a detailed, profusely-illustrated and technically exact study of the break in Bengal's temple architecture from the *sorvatobhadra* and *sikhara* of the Palasena period to the *chala*, *ratna* and *dalan* types from the 15th century onwards — a transition which he explains in terms of the coming together of West Asian, antiquated North-Indian, and Bengali folk-traditions. The links which he establishes between the predominant *chala* form and the 15th-16th century efflorescence of Bengali popular regional culture in general and Cauriya Vaishnavism in particular make fascinating reading. Equally interesting (and incidentally going totally against certain communalist assumptions) is the section on the impact of regional Muslim religious architecture, which under the Ilyas Shahs was the first to incorporate the 'popular regional symbol' of the *chala* thatched hut of the peasants a hundred years before the Hindus followed suit in their temples.

Another very exciting discovery of Dr. Sanyal is the 'phenomenal proliferation' in temple-building for a hundred years from the 1760s onwards, which he connects with the upward mobility of members of certain hitherto-lowly castes, such facts immediately reveal the limited urban and elite-bound nature of the bulk of our historical writings on 19th century 'modernisation' or 'renaissance'. Yet, this proliferation went hand-in-hand with a kind of stagnation or even degeneration, evident from the 17th century onwards in the failure to develop a number of technical architectural possibilities. Dr. Sanyal suggests some socio-economic reasons for such failures, one feels, however, that this closing section requires further elaboration and perhaps the paper here does not fully live up to the promise implicit in its sub-title 'A study in social response to technological innovation'. But here Dr. Sanyal can legitimately ask us to wait for his forthcoming book, *The Bengali Style in Temple-Building: A Social Study*.

The theme implicit in Hiteshranjan Sanyal's — the possibilities and limits of the pre-colonial Indian society and economy — is tackled directly in Asok Sen's seminal case-study of Tipu Sultan's Mysore as a 'pre-British economic formation in India'. Sen has made a major contribution to the debate on potentialities of capitalist development (to borrow from the title of Prof. Irfan Habib's paper, the most substantial so far on the subject). He breaks away both from the somewhat narrow concentration on purely economic developments, on the one hand, and the perhaps undue stress on the classic bourgeois political revolutions characteristic of the earlier generation of Marxist writing on the transition to capitalism in Europe, on the other.

In a brilliant analysis of the European experience, Sen has emphasised the totality of social transfor-

mation needed for the model capitalist breakthrough, and above all the need for the coming into existence of 'civil society', with its 'autonomous sphere of economic activity unimpeded by religious and political restrictions', through which the bourgeoisie gained its hegemony even before the complete seizure of State power in countries like England. The old discussion concerning Marx's 'two ways' of capitalist development acquires a quite new and far more fruitful content when it is linked, as by Sen, with Gramsci's insights about civil society and hegemony. The path 'from below' then corresponds to the bourgeois conquest of hegemony, while the second way involved the predominance of merchant capital and the eventual authoritarian State, as in Russia, Japan, or, less successfully, Tsarist Russia.

Neither paths, however, seem to have been really open in the case of pre-colonial India, and Marx's model of 'Asiatic society', incorrect though many of its particular assumptions have been shown to be (e.g., communal landholding, despotism based on large scale irrigation, relative unimportance of commodity production), still contains insights relevant for the understanding of its specifics. Private property in land had not attained the clarity, concentration, and emancipation from political and religious constraints of its West European prototype, while the existence of flourishing merchant groups did not involve the growth of self-conscious bourgeois autonomy. Mughal despotism shared with 'Renaissance Monarchies' the problem of an 'expanding margin of waste' but not its more positive attribute of conscious mercantilism.

Tipu Sultan's Mysore provides in Sen's analysis the classic example of an apparent exception proving the rule. Tipu's efforts, in face of the British challenge, to bring about rapid developments in agriculture, industry and trade through State action alone proved in the end no more than a heroic failure, as Sen has shown through a very detailed study of his economic policies. Colonial rule, Sen rightly emphasises in conclusion, only ossified the old constraints and added many new ones by bringing about 'the most severe breakdown of the production economy mixed up in spurious sanctions of imported enlightenment', and 'the "ineffective wastes of the political ocean", usually taken to be so characteristic of the Orient, never became a thing of the past in the history of England's work in India.'

Barun De's paper provides the logical compliment to Sen, with its detailed critique of interpretations of 19th century India in terms of a modernising 'renaissances'. De links the fondness of so many scholars for renaissance analogues to the widespread assumption of unilinear developments in history — an assumption often made also in Marxist history-writing, but quite untenable in terms of Marx's own comments even on European developments. Very interesting use is made here of some little-known remarks of Marx on Spain and Engels on Italy.

De distinguishes three strands within the historiographical tradition built around the renaissance model — glorification of 19th century reform and revivalist movements by their adherents or later admirers, British liberal-imperialist history-writing, and some early Indian Marxist interpretations which over-emphasised (and perhaps misunderstood) Marx's stray comment on the 'regenerating' aspects of British rule in India. That the 'liberal utopia' fostered by such views was not consistently modernist even in intention is revealed by its occasional links with both Hindu and Muslim communalism — and here De makes telling use of extracts from R.C. Majumdar and Abul Mansur Ahmed. As often in De's writings, the paper is full of illuminating asides which one hopes he will elaborate further elsewhere — the inappropriateness of the fashionable 'elite' concept in the context of Indian nationalism, the relatively democratic role of some elements within the 19th and early 20th century intelligentsia despite its false 'renaissance' premises, or the possible connections between shifts in Indian Marxist thinking and social changes within the Communist movement in our country.

The concluding 'review essay' by Dipesh Chakrabarti is by far the briefest, yet by no means the least significant of the papers in the volume. The contradictions and limits of colonial 'modernisation' are here tackled very concretely at the micro-level of a West Bengal rural town (Bolpur), on the basis of data provided in a study written within a much more conventional framework (Chittapriya Mukherji's *Urban Growth in a Rural Area*, Visva-bharati 1972). The growth of the railway town of Bolpur from the 1860s had been preceded by the decline of old commercial and producing centres on the Ajoy river-route like Ilambarar or Surul, and this growth was entirely a function of the rice export-trade controlled ultimately by British business houses in Calcutta.

Thus 'we see in Bolpur vis-a-vis Calcutta a variant of what Andre Gunder Frank describes rather simplistically as Metropolis-Satellite relationship within a colonial economy'. The pattern of 'metropolitan dominance' has continued after independence. With rice mills growing in number and profitability but on the basis of intensified exploitation and not improved techniques, and smaller local millers being displaced by Calcutta based Marwaris. Bolpur's development has thus 'induced little growth either in the town or in the hinterland', and Chakrabarti finds a similar pattern operative in the impact also of Visva-bharati's expansion. 'Today the university acts mainly perhaps as a spread-centre of urban tastes and consumerism', in an essentially parasitic development quite out of tune with Tagore's own ideals of rural reconstruction.

Taken as a whole, then, the central focus of the papers in this volume is on the crucially important theme of the historical roots of present-day constraints on Indian development, both colonial and pre-colonial. Such problems can only be tackled fruitfully by

breaking down the conventional barriers between the various social sciences, to which the present volume has made a notable contribution. The courage, insight and depth reflected in *Perspectives in Social Sciences* seem extremely relevant to the academic world of a country which has just pulled itself out of a traumatic Emergency only to be confronted by a full-scale obscurantist attack motivated by what a recent *Seminar* contributor has aptly described as fear of scientific history. We urgently need scholarship of this kind, in the context particularly of officially-encouraged efforts to impose the outdated views on history of a certain nonagerian high-priest of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, views pseudo-Ranke-ian in form and blatantly chauvinist and communal in content.

Sumit Sarkar

INTELLECTUALS AT THE CROSSROADS by

Akhileshwar Jha. Vikas Publishing House,
New Delhi, 1977.

AFTER a rash of racy Emergency books—a titillating and often careless blend of hard news and political gossip mongering—which nevertheless made Vikas a success story in Indian publishing, it could have afforded to be more selective in its choice of authors and subjects. Akhileshwar Jha's *Intellectuals at the Crossroads* is a case in point. It is 110 pages of loosely-worded, largely unoriginal and poorly edited matter, which a ruthless newspaper editor could have licked into shape in a thousand words or less. That is, if he or she was short of good Sunday copy.

As it is, paying Rs. 36 for a thesis which will undoubtedly collect dust in some college archives—if not in those of the publishing house concerned—is a ridiculous imposition. And, for a recently published book, Jha's sniping at the Indian intellectual today completely neglects the 19 months between June 1975 and February 1977—whether benignly or otherwise, one is at a loss to understand why. For, if the Indian intellectual deserves a savage indictment, it is as much for his cowardice and sycophancy during the Emergency (with a few notable exceptions), as for his meagre contribution to the realm of ideas.

A part of Jha's thesis—that the Indian intellectual is strait-jacketed by his role as a member of the Establishment—provides a pointer to the ostrich-like stance of so many journalists, academics and all-purpose pundits in Indira's India. For unlike the Western countries, where the intellectual maintains a deliberate division between himself and the administration of power—the line gets finer today and is frequently smudged—in the developing countries, 'the intellectual is the central figure in the whole drama of power politics.'

Lest you begin to wonder at the utterly beguiling injudiciousness of crediting the Idi Amin Dadas and

Indira Gandhis of this world with intellectual tensions—not to mention various self-superiors and army generals with two-syllable laries—Jha hastens to add that the majority of intellectuals, in India at least, comprises persons who, having made that profound comment, he goes on to explain why.

The Indian intellectual is really a by-product of colonial rule, nurtured by foreign schools of thought, systematically cut off from the majority of his people, unable to empathise with their aspirations and expectations and worse still, unable to govern them wisely when transferred to power. It is a thesis that Franz Fanon stated lucidly and developed with frightening clarity in his *Wretched of the Earth*.

Having said that, Jha goes on to extol the Raj: 'India had no intellectuals in the sense in which they are known today, before the establishment of the British Raj.' The Raj unified, it modernised, it introduced English, the railways, indivisible justice, and what have-you. All right. It also created a crisis of national identity. It brought to government numerous Oxford and LSE graduates, so well trained in the imperialistic tradition that they became neo-colonialists themselves when smitten with power. 'The intellectual-ruled society,' says Jha, 'tends to be authoritarian and ultimately anti-intellectual.' This is one instance where he is very right.

In the long run, he says, Nehru's policy of inducting intellectuals into all levels of government, did more harm than good. Men like Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Zakir Hussain would have contributed more to their respective disciplines, and therefore to the country as a whole, if left to function outside of government. Introducing intellectuals to power meant starting an unhealthy jockeying for positions of authority, a scramble to get on to commissions and akademis, to corner ambassadorships and fellowships abroad.

The Indian intellectual, Jha complains, has adapted modernity to his own traditional lifestyle instead of tailoring his traditional life to the demands of modernity. He is happy to chant mantras from Marx and Lenin, Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh, Sartre and Marcuse, instead of realising 'that no process of healthy modernisation can succeed without the full and involuntary involvement of the masses.'

It is hardly a new insight, but Jha evidently considers it a substantive revelation. He glibly suggests that once the 'masses' are given 'more and more rights which will make them more fully aware of their duties,' the intellectuals will be freed of the responsibility of governing them.

The modalities of this transfer are left to the imagination. Or would Mr. Jha like the British back?

Dina Vakil

**RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL — SEARCH FOR
IDENTITY** by Arabinda Poddar. Indian Institute
of Advanced Study, Simla, 1977.

THE era of Bengal's awakening has captured the imagination of numerous Indian and foreign scholars. The Renaissance, the young Bengal movement, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Brahmo Samaj, the emergence of nationalism are all subjects on which much has been written. Arabinda Poddar's *Renaissance in Bengal — Search for Identity* is an account of the ferment witnessed in Bengal in the last four decades of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, it adds little to our existing knowledge of this period.

The present work is both thematically and chronologically a continuation of Poddar's earlier volume on *Renaissance in Bengal Quests and Confrontation*. The central theme, as indicated in the title, is the search of Bengal's intelligentsia for a national identity. The story begins with a brief review of the growing disillusionment of genteel, English educated, urban, high caste Bengalis, otherwise known as *bhadraloks*, with British rule. This class, in the pre-1857 era, had believed in the 'do-gooding' mission of the British *raj* but in the years after 1860 became aware of the process of colonisation which was gradually but ruthlessly changing the structure of Bengal's economy. Increasing poverty, de-industrialisation, educated unemployment and frustration — all this is familiar ground.

Poddar emphasizes the psychic and cultural wounds inflicted by arrogant colonialists and yet the admiration of the educated elite for western culture was so deeply rooted that few could shake off its spell successfully. In order to identify themselves with the people and reassert their national pride, this class turned first to religion and then to politics. The facts about the first stirring of political consciousness, the origins of the Hindu mela, the Dawn society, Swadeshi movement, national education, touched upon here, are well known.

The book is not about the activities of the Bengal intelligentsia in association with one another behaving institutionally or within some kind of social system, but rather about the ideas and writings of a few intellectuals and their response to the cultural challenge of the West. Articulation, not action, is Poddar's criterion for choosing the major representative figures of the age. All of them suffered from a kind of split personality and a psychological dualism, torn between two worlds in both of which they were aliens.

The author illustrates 'the paradox, vacillation and the self-contradiction that invariably followed from the confrontation of two opposing cultures and civilizations' from the lives of seven eminent Victorians, the first of whom is Keshub Chandra Sen. Born of a devout Vaishnav family, Sen chose to draw his inspiration from the New Testament. An

eclectic, he was attracted to the Brahmo Samaj and later to Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Alienated from his people, he tried to identify himself with them through social reform and philanthropy but failed to do so because of his Anglophilism and Westernization.

The essay on Bankimchandra is one of the best. Having received an English education, Bankim was acutely aware of the need for educated Bengalees to regain their identity and emphasized the importance of using Bengali in this search. Literary criticism is obviously Poddar's forte, and he shows through a discussion of Bankim's novels how the latter made an attempt to re-establish the Hindu kingdom of the past as a step to mould in its light the future of India. Poddar examines and refutes the charge that Bankim fostered a communal spirit. In the first edition of *Anandmath*, Bankim did not use the words *Yavan* and *nere* which meant Muslim, but in their place, consistently used the word *angrej* (English). The substitution in later editions, argues Poddar, may have been to avoid the wrath of the government.

For Surendranath Banerjee, the author has nothing but contempt. 'More English than most Englishmen', Surendranath retained his Anglophilism to the last and gave little serious thought to the conquest of one cultural heritage by another.

The author next discusses Vivekananda's ardent search for identity and his glorification of India's spiritual heritage. Bipin Chandra Pal held that the urge for freedom was generic in the Bengali people. Initiated into Brahmoism, this 'prophet of nationalism' turned more and more to Hinduism in his search for the soul of India. The piece on Aurobindo reveals how a thoroughly Westernised Bengali retransformed himself into an Indian. The last of the major figures dealt with is Rabindranath Tagore.

The reader will find these pen-portraits interesting but will discover little that he did not know before.

The dust jacket describes the author's approach as sociological with a Marxist bias. But neither is much in evidence in the present volume. Poddar admits in his Preface that he is concerned with the superstructure rather than the base. The superstructure is not however sociologically analysed. The crisis of identity theme has been ably explored by Kenneth Jones in his study of the Arya Samaj and growth of Hindu consciousness in nineteenth century Punjab, no such attempt is made here.

Poddar uses certain Marxist phraseology and quotes from Rajni Palme Dutt but that is about all. There is a passing reference in the conclusion to the economic goals of the elite but that is not his main concern. No attempt is made to set men and their ideas in a socio-economic context. He makes statements quite unorthodox for a Marxist — 'In the nineteenth century, religious identity was at once the surest and most recognisable' (p.29) and again

the Anglophiles spoke for the suffering humanity in India' (p. 37). Poddar does dwell on the point of how stress on Hindu identity alienated the Muslims but he does not discuss the ideas and writings of a single Muslim.

It is disappointing that Poddar has contributed so little that is original. While syntheses are no doubt useful, much more necessary is the need for specialists to produce monographs based on a fresh look at original sources, ask new questions and frame new hypotheses.

Aparna Basu

HISTORY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT by

B.M. Bhatia. Volume I, Elites in Modern India.

Vol II, Elites, Democracy and Socialism. Vikas.

SOCIOLOGICAL pronouncements remind one of the metaphysical onion of the pretentious eastern sage who stated that 'Truth is verily like an onion—when you peel one layer you see the next' Various onion peelers, or more properly, scholars, have tried to unravel the verities at different structural levels even somersaulting the so-called axial principles as enunciated by St Simon and Marx but have yet to conclusively prove that they have unpeeled the whole truth. This, by its very nature, is palpably impossible, and probably the controversies will continue till the end of time in new forms and disguises.

The main controversy and the apparent divide is about property versus power as the main motivational force behind political conflict and change. The author, aware of these intellectual crossroads, comes down firmly on the side of the proponents of power. This is understandable as the power theory is very much in vogue and even Marxist sociologists have occasionally bent backwards to incorporate a modified power proposition into their guru's thesis.

Briefly, then, the author in these two volumes devotes his attention to maintain the propositions (1) that power (in any system) is exercised by a small minority which is *the elite* (ii) the motivating force for this elite is the love of power. Whilst the first proposition can be maintained intact by defining the term 'elite' in a circular way as 'those who exercise power', the second proposition is more controversial and inherent with various complexities. One can appreciate these motivational complexities by reference to history to groups outside our immediate objects of study such as the worldly-wise religious leaders, from Popes to Sai Baba, who have invariably shown singular consideration not only to those politically powerful but to those holding chunky properties and material possessions.

Given the author's thesis that history is made neither by the masses, nor by the silently working forces but by the elites, in Vol I, he proceeds smoothly, competently from the traditional elites as described in our *Shastras* to the development of the new elites

with the advent of the British in India. The work is laced liberally with apt quotations and a useful bibliography at the end. There is no doubt that this analysis of the changing patterns of the responses of those who flourished, struggled and finally evolved as the rulers of post-British India should be of primary interest to politicians, journalists, students of modern Indian history and all those who are trying to grapple with the more recent, bewildering, developments after a quarter century of unruffled linearity.

Possibly the best summary of the first volume which appeared a few years ago is its final paragraph: 'Modern India is what its elites made it. Its history is, on the one hand, the history of intra-elite power conflicts and, on the other, the rule and response of India's modern elite to changing historical situations during British rule'.

Thus, having completed the historical study he now tries to develop in the second volume the theoretical framework of his thesis. And in this context it is important to understand his use of the term 'elite'. To quote him, 'Elite and Elitism are loaded terms. I am using the word elite in this book in a purely academic, value neutral sense. Like any scientific term, it is being employed as a shorthand expression to denote all those who occupy superior positions in society which give them power, prestige and influence over others. It is a tool of analysis rather than a description and/or an attempt at advocacy of any particular political and social systems or ideology.'

'Further, as conceived here, elite positions are not hereditary but are acquired in the lifetime of individuals concerned through their own social action. Thus, when it is stated that the elites of a society shape the course of its history, reference is to those who are in power at any point of time in the history of that society. That is intended to be a statement of the factual position as the author sees it and not an expression of any opinion of what should be the case. In other words, I am not advocating elite rule but only stating that the elite or the ruling class, by virtue of the political power it exercises, is able to and does shape the course of history.'

How loaded the key word is will be realised by how its definition tends to wobble in different sections of the work. For instance, in his Book I, page 26, he defines society in two classes: the ruling and the ruled 'a section of the ruling class at any time in history constitutes the governing elite and the rest of that class, the governed or non-governing elite. The latter again may be subdivided into collaborators and competitors, the former sharing some power through impassive roles, the latter striving to get power. History is partly a story of struggle of power between the governing elite and the non-governing competing elites.'

On the other Hand, in Vol II, page 260, he equates the word elite with the class that exercises power.

I quote 'The most appropriate axial principle for the study of history in its abstract sense... would be one that is based on the power relationship between the two broad classes of society, those who hold power and others on whom power is exercised, the elites and the masses or the ruling class and the rest of the community.' In the earlier quotation 'elite' is further restricted to a section of the ruling class (my italics).

This leads to the pertinent question of the role of the intellectual who is not a component of the ruling group or when he is not interested in seeking power. Is he or is he not a member of the elite of the society. I find that Professor T.A. Bottomore, whom the author consulted on this work, is much more satisfying specially when he refers to the situation in developing countries where 'intellectuals frequently represent modern Western culture and find themselves separated from, and in conflict with the traditional, cultural values of the mass of their fellow countrymen. This is one of the sources of tension in countries such as India which are undergoing industrialisation and it may also be a source of political authoritarianism in so far as the cultural isolation of the intellectuals emphasizes the distinction between the elite and the masses.'

Then, the concept of elitism is modified by other attributes such as 'prestige' which brings in variations affecting the Marxist class system in two important ways: by interposing between the two major classes a range of status groups which bridge the gulf between the extreme condition in the class structure, and, secondly, by suggesting an entirely different conception of the social hierarchy as a whole according to which it appears as a continuum of more or less clearly defined status positions, determined by a variety of factors and simply by property ownership, which is incompatible with the formation of massive social classes and with the existence of the fundamental conflict between the classes. The relations between status groups at different levels are of competition and emulation, not of conflict. With the growth in number of the middle classes which form an increasing proportion of the whole population, this view of the social hierarchy as a continuum of prestige ranks without any sharp breaks, and thus without any clear lines of conflict between major social groups seems to significantly alter or modify past thinking on this subject

But, as the starting point of the present study is political conflict, the question is whether the social groups involved in such a conflict are the elites or the classes. Two sociological scholars have made major contributions: To Pareto in his major concern with the 'governing elite' the terms class and 'elite' were practically synonymous, and it is in the context of his own theory of the 'circulation of elites' that Pareto regards the notion of class conflict as the most important of Marx's contributions to sociology. More recently, sociologists have used the term 'elite' to refer to smaller and more cohesive groups, which

maybe more or less closely connected as social classes as traditionally conceived.

Raymond Aron who provided one of the best studies of the relationship between elites and social classes formulates the problem as one of the relation between social differentiation and political hierarchy in modern societies and sets out to show that the 'abolition of classes' (abolishing private ownership of the means of production) will not resolve the problems of social differentiation, formation of elites, and inequalities of political power.

It would be possible to draw out other complexities and start analysing them. But this would be an unnecessary imposition. There is no doubt that the author has traversed to his satisfaction, the byeways of such a study with the skill of a ballerina doing a pirouette on a tight rope. That is why the reader expects a new illumination or a brilliant climax towards the conclusion. Therefore, regrettably, the end comes as an anti-climax like a stale peroration of a pedestrian public speaker. It goes like this: 'Man has struggled through the ages for equality and freedom on the one hand and economic well being on the other ... the forces of history are ever taking man to what appears to be to his ultimate destiny — the establishment of a world democratic socialist order.' As the author commands intellectual grasp and verve it seems surprising that he lets go of these to fall back upon the old clichés like 'history moves in a zigzag way', 'progress is never linear'. Does he subscribe to doubtful theories of progress and historic predestination?

He sees crises, conflicts, wars etc., 'before the final stage in social development is reached. The force of world history is already working in that direction'. And now comes the great anti-climax. What is to be the role of the elites to which the author has devoted two volumes of labour. Faced with the prospect of complete annihilation, he ends with the mundane hope that 'the bleak future can be avoided if elites, both intellectual and political were to realise the dangers inherent in the current situation and work unitedly in taking the world, through peaceful international co-operation, to the ultimate destination of social democratic order.'

I wish that the author before making this valedictory pronouncement in such terms had considered the current situation on a global basis and the role of elites just as in the first volume he gave a competent analysis of their role in the Indian context. Perhaps this should be the author's Volume III in which he might, incidentally, include a chapter on *Elites and the Accumulation of Capital* detailing how the rulers in democracies manage to corner for themselves a disproportionately larger share of the national cake, particularly in developing and under developed countries, whilst all the time making appropriate gurgling sounds about egalitarianism, economic equality and the abolition of poverty. And, please, include the bibliography!

Rudolf Gyan D'Mello

Communications

THERE are two rival images of India 1977.... One sees the Indian people as mature and inherently tolerant, even excessively idolatrous of their masters but who do not permit themselves to be fooled eternally by an unusually callous, diabolical elite unparalleled even in the best of times in its lust for arbitrary power (whatever it amounts to), abuse of office or debaucheries of cowardice. This people has shown itself capable of rising above all these, and grinding to a halt the tyranny 'a la Indira is India'. That was in the last March Lok-Sabha election — quick fusion of disparate political parties into the Janata earlier, leading to the end of the ignominious Emergency and its infamous pimps.

Of course soon afterwards doubts reappeared about the miracle as the South registered its clear rejection of the Janata promise and Bengal and Kashmir soon opted out of the Janata Wave in the north during the June Assembly poll. Perhaps, even more symbolic was the success of five out of the six Congress nominees in the June poll in Mrs. Gandhi's Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency!

So to the other image. We Indians are broadly an irresponsible, gullible, scandal prone lot. Perennial lethargy, idle verbalism and supine multiplying characterise us as a people... A psychological analysis in terms of some deep sense of inferiority in all of us, might account for this susceptibility to the criminal denigration of other's reputation. Be it as it may, it was only a determined, purposive, and clear-sighted leadership that could take us out of this anarchy; as such the Emergency was a brief reprieve from the sorry mess of public disorder. After 26th June, 1975, we had a period of rational haven formed with diligence to usher in a new life of disciplined peace, price stability, visibly spruced, trimmed and tidied just society. Population had to be controlled by police-measures, and here was one good government which fell on the wayside for one thing when it stood firm on Nasbandi and backed it up by stiff police measures! This was of course a great disaster not only for the government that got ousted, but for population control so essential for India.

The protector of Nehruvian secularism, true

and dedicated helmswoman of modernity against obscurantism, fell, and now we already witness the dogs of hell denigrating the past, pulling out history from its roots ruining the delicate plant of composite culture, the legacy of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal and their dreams of a noble modern India. In short, we are now in a time of crisis and .. all lovers of progress, reason and freedom must join and do something before it is too late as stooges of international bourgeoisie and petty-minded Hindu chauvinists manage to blow out the very light that liberated India from medievalism and slavery in 1947. Food, wide-spread sabotage and break down of law-and order, Harijan baiting riots, crimes, strikes, lockouts, gheraos, closure of colleges, factories, banks — this is the second image of India 1977.

The truth is somewhere in the middle. While the Emergency was no boon, J.P.'s total revolution so far has been a total flop.... The Janata Party has only ricocheted and reeled under its own internal cross-currents all these months and, in spite of many long policy pronouncements, has so far failed to set itself to a course of determined implementation of its electoral promises or even effective administration as a precondition of liberty. The alternative of playing up the evils of Emergency or freeing MISA detenus ought to have stopped; Indira-baiting serves no social purpose.

The Janata Government after thirty years of Congress monopoly at the centre aroused feelings of exhilaration and high hopes in the broad masses, but it soon became clear that its early achievements would be purely negative like the removal of the infamous censor, fears of extra-constitutionalism that sullied the fair name of this country. So, one may say that Janata speedily fulfilled its electoral promise of rule by law or at least is on the way to its substantial realization. But can this suffice? No, unfortunately not, as none of these clever checks and balances of procedures and constitutional devices of collateral surveillance for ensuring independence of statutory organs, work ... Eternal vigilance by the enlightened conscience is the sole basis of a people's liberty and effective public-opinion its only tool. So far nothing has been achieved on this count to gladden the heart

of a genuine lover of freedom, in post Emergency India.

The Janata Party's electoral promise of full restoration of rule of law in the country could be attempted only if it rises above hobnobbing with the deeply entrenched corrupt sections used to assimilating every new ruler to its perennial horse-trading. These need quick and severe surgery without fear of vested interests or loss of favour from sections who control vote-banks in the party itself as well as without witch-hunting or anger. These high-priests and architects of slavery are being currently identified. None should escape if found guilty by the judicial commissions, the most important being presided over by Justice J.C. Shah. Let one hope this job of cleaning the Augean stables of the Emergency is completed early and the credibility of our democracy restored... Of course, without political witch-hunting. It is to be hoped that after taking lofty poses, society is not once again subjected to a farce. Such a betrayal of promises made at the hustings would be injurious to democracy ..

We must coolly reflect on the factors that caused the complete debacle of nerves in the top echelons of Indian society and seek remedies that such a failure never recurs. The causes of this lurking insecurity must be faced first and then the ideology of rabid opportunism that has hoisted itself in our middle-class civilian and professional elite be removed by genuine reconstruction of its own self-image. How those who so much hanker for elite status fail to stand up to its demands in crisis and stress, needs to be investigated and steps taken to buttress the low morale of Indian citizens to live up to the obligation of a watchdog of our collective liberty, including holding firm on the right to dissent without fear of being roughed up by vultures of tyranny. *It is an absolute Desideratum.* Gandhiji has to be practised more in his personal doctrine of *abhaya* than in those hideous parodies of his Satyagraha called *gheraos*. The mere statutory dropping of MISA or other visible signs of tyranny are not enough. It is good that Lok-Ayukt is proposed, freedom of press, and independence of judiciary is sought to be reintroduced since March 1977, but what Janata ought to get from the new Gandhian leaders in 1978 is the effective creation of the infrastructure of a functioning Lok-shakti and Lok-niti to realise the promise of participative democracy — a sort of non-ritualistic feed-back system continuously monitoring the felt needs of inarticulate masses in diverse regions

Similarly, J.P.'s suggestions for higher education and its impact on the speedy egalitarian redistribution of wealth and income, as well as his proposal of constituting a grass-roots voter's council to oversee the effective people's representation in the legislature, and the cautious introduction of the procedure of recall of elected

representatives is worth a genuine try. Of course, J.P.'s proposal should be examined by people's committees formed by public-spirited individuals, themselves from among the youth, women, harijan and local professionals jointly contributing to the confidence and faith in a national resurgence, irrespective of political differences of belief or party, to the 'good' of the — local community.

There is economic anarchy, strains to unity, and federalism, oppression of minorities, source of uncertainty about Hindi and prohibition, air of sabotage and terror practised by elements that are deliberately provoking disorder and instability, it is hoped that experienced Janata leaders would restore confidence among the people on all these scores without falling prey to panic or imposing measures smacking of a police mentality.

I end this uncalled for and long Reader's intervention in your Journal 'Seminar' with an appeal kindly to direct some of your space in the direction of providing a humble forum for the work of such groups that I am sure must be showing up as a result of new consciousness generated amongst the youth in different parts of the country in recent months for setting up voluntary people's committees. They could get a fulcrum through 'Seminar'.

I expect some response from amongst your readers to what I say about educated youth's perception of its obligations towards the life of the community, for which, apart from all the borrowed cynicism, they still entertain a lot of genuine love.

Dharmendra Goel
Department of Philosophy,
Punjab University, Chandigarh.

I WELCOME the coming discussion in the next issue of SEMINAR on our intellectuals, a prickly but scorching subject. The working-kit of the intellectual consists of ideas, often ridiculed as theory or academic, but also feared by the ruling power as nothing else is. Yet, ideas can be helpless to resolve a crisis, unless there is an organised movement behind it that can transform the social structure and carry it forward. On the day after the announcement of the rout of Indira Gandhi and her party in the historic Lok Sabha general election of last year, the leading editorial of *The Times of India*, Bombay, felt free at last to thunder that the people had waged nothing less than a second freedom struggle. It was the much-criticised universal adult franchise that had brought about a change after thirty years that should have come much earlier, and not the elite or the intelligentsia, who had become servile, stirring exceptions always apart.

It has been said in extenuation that the intellectual's life in modern India has not been easy, and that his weakness as well as his strength have to

be understood. In the freedom movement of other countries, intellectuals have played an important part. Have we fallen short in this respect? An intellectual is supposed to have a free and fearless mind. He may have to sell himself to survive, but must guard against allowing himself to be bought, so that his soul may survive too. There is a charge that the Indian intelligentsia has not performed its historical role, that the techniques of our struggle left no room for the specific role of the intellectuals and that hence they remained aloof from the processes of struggle, that this has created a gulf between conviction and performance, which continues to be the main conflict of the Indian intelligentsia.

The dangerous attack from the anti-intellectuals in the seats of power has to be met, for national revival cannot be confused with revivalism. The counter-attack has to be a co-operative and not just an isolated effort. Will the serious intellectual accept a pre-occupation with and a dedication to humanism and the struggle for liberty? And would this acceptance alone qualify him to be a humanist, which is otherwise difficult to define?

Take the attack on historical investigation. History belongs to the humanities, but the interpretation of something so rich and complex and old as Indian history, needs the outlook of a social scientist and the combination of varied disciplines, methods and techniques of investigation to arrive at a picture, which approximates growingly to historical reality, and separates myth and propaganda from it. There is a threat to the freedom of historians to conduct serious historical research on lines suggested by their data and not pre-ordained by politicians. It is only a correct reading of history that teaches us that those lands where the leading intellectuals persisted in speculating on questions of religious philosophy and theology, remained ignorant, backward and were progressively enslaved, in spite of a millennial culture. No advance was possible out of this decay without a modern technique of production, towards which the intellectual's main contribution was through science.

Intellectuals cannot afford to be indifferent to the nature of human beings. Aldous Huxley defined human beings as multiple amphibians, living simultaneously in half a dozen radically dissimilar universes — the molecular and the ethical, the psychological and the symbolic, the world of incommunicably subjective experience and the public worlds of language and culture, of social organisation and the sciences. Because they can talk and think and pass on accumulated knowledge from one generation to the next, human beings are incomparably cleverer than the cleverest of animals. But because they often talk foolishly, think illogically and reverence pseudo-knowledge as though it were revealed truth, they can also be incomparably more stupid, more unhappy, more cruel and rapacious than the most mindlessly savage

of dumb beasts. Brutes are merely brutal, men and women are capable of being devils and lunatics. They are no less capable of being fully human — even, occasionally, of being a bit more than fully human, of being saints, heroes, and geniuses.

A.K. Banerjee,
Bombay.

INTELLECTUALS of any country are persons possessing intellect. Intellect is a specific attribute of any person. This attribute manifests itself in the following functions: will for, and orientation towards, receipt of cognitive inputs, accurate and intensive observation, discrimination, comprehension, verification and action. This chain applies to the entire range of situations a person may be placed in.

A person is born in a particular milieu and evolves in one, or more. The totality of any person's milieu contains contributions from family, community, race, religion, climate, nutrition, country and, the world; and each of these adds a particular dimension to his/her personality in general and intellect, in particular.

The manifestation of the intellect of a person is always within the context of his/her other attributes, viz., health, age, emotion, faith, fantasy and self-perception; and these, like intellect, have their genesis in the total milieu. The enquiry into the nature of our intellectuals, thus, necessitates an examination of their intellect as a part of the ensemble of all attributes in their respective milieus. Further, it is necessary, but not enough, to view their milieus as culminations of historical factors.

The word 'intellectuals' connotes a specific brand of Western European thinkers of late 18th Century origin. In this sense 'intellectuals' of India are a late 19th or 20th Century phenomenon. Our earlier thinkers were of a type that is significantly different from that of contemporary intellectuals, and that species is slowly becoming extinct for various reasons. Consequently, any meaningful examination of our intellectuals must include comparison with their Western counterparts.

The historical genesis of the present milieu. the country has borne the influx of three gigantic influences of Aryan, Mughal and British civilisations. The influx has consisted of blood, material, religions, statecrafts, cultures and philosophies. Each influx, by assimilation and adaptation, has produced hybrid civilisations and, by reaction, has created indissoluble segments in the society. A range of diversity encompassing every aspect of life, from private dreams to public ideology, has been formed.

An intellectual in any country, by the very nature of his being, functions differently from those who are not. And, intellectual activity does not occur in a vacuum of its own, but within the context of the total personality of the individual comprised of attributes named earlier. For a certain category of Indian intellectuals, however, such activity, more

often than not, occurs in a private vacuum of its own, with its self-contained terms, methods and criteria of validation and totally disjointed from other aspects of personality. For another category its intellectual activity takes place in a working harmony with other zones of personality and, as a category, it sustains itself only in relation to a select reference group of 'peers'. In the former category fall the intellectuals with a vertical schizophrenic split in their personality while those of the latter, though whole in themselves, produce a horizontal segment by their 'ivory' towers. There is a third small variety of intellectuals with a diagonal split running across their intellect and other attributes, and with a social position which cannot be meaningfully assessed in horizontal and vertical terms alone. This variety is yet to take form as a category.

The first two categories are the result of incomplete adaptations to alien cultures. Historically, the learned men of India when subjugated by external powers have had to either adopt the dominant culture or recede from it into their older one which was dying and turning into a fossil. Both reactions were expedient and only that, since it is most difficult for learned men to submit to conquest. Hence the schism between real life and the practice of living, which is reflected in the perennial adulation of 'inner' life as a superior mode of living. The schisms have solidified over time into compartments with impervious walls. In the first category of intellectuals these compartments exist in one mind and they retain without discomfort two or more mutually exclusive and conflicting world-views, e.g., science — religion, and live their lives with effortless

switches from one compartment to another on demands of situations. The second category has made a near-total switch to the present dominant culture — by successful insulation — economic, social and political — from the surrounding debris; and this category has already come into its second generation. Both categories carry in their subconscious a deep ignominy of defeat and both have germinated wholly reactively. As a consequence, today, we have the repressive supremacy of group norm over individual intransigence in every field of life, 'linearity' in art, science, politics and literature, aversion towards critical historical investigation and the absence of autonomous standards for individual and national self-evaluation. The emotional substratum of these two categories of intellectuals is predominantly composed of guilt, shame, despair and anger, but not boredom.

A few things that can be said, with some degree of assurance, about the third category mentioned above are: (a) it has taken birth after 1947 and is largely free from reactive perception (vis-a-vis external influence) of its identity, (b) its members mostly form a part of the middle class, (c) it tends to view national issues from a global perspective, (d) it uses Hindustani and English languages with nearly equal felicity, (e) its membership is very small — in fact, it forms a category only on an analytic plane — and is socially, vocationally and linguistically inhomogenous and, (f) emotionally it tends to be bored, angry, despondent and euphoric.

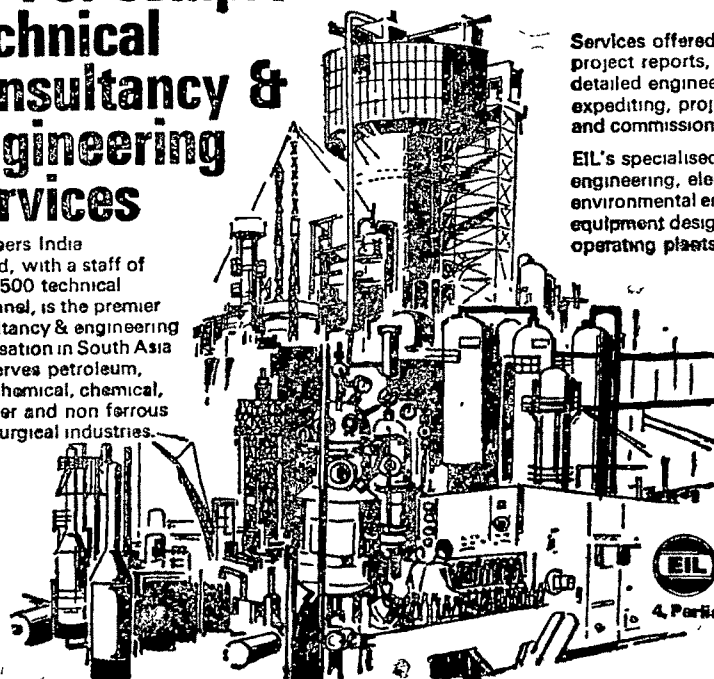
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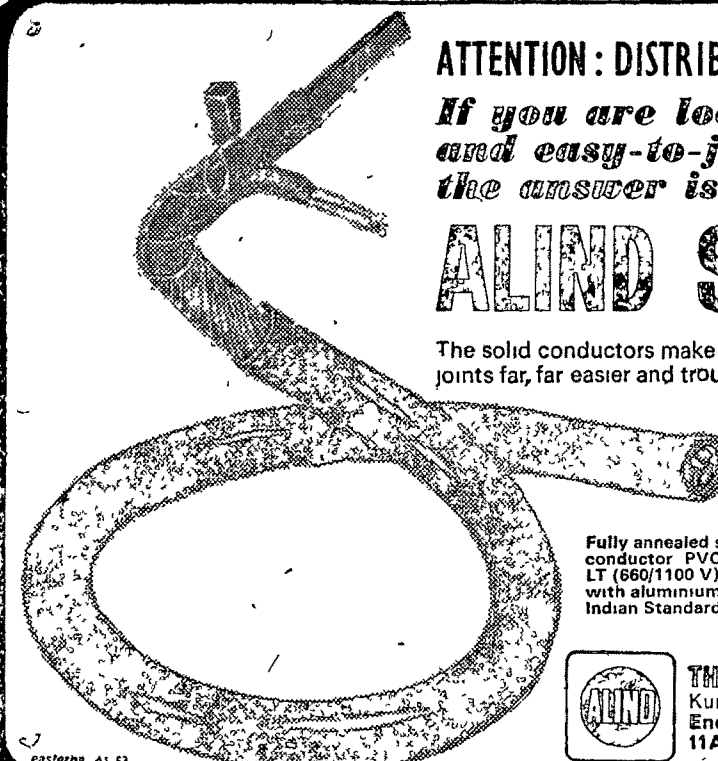
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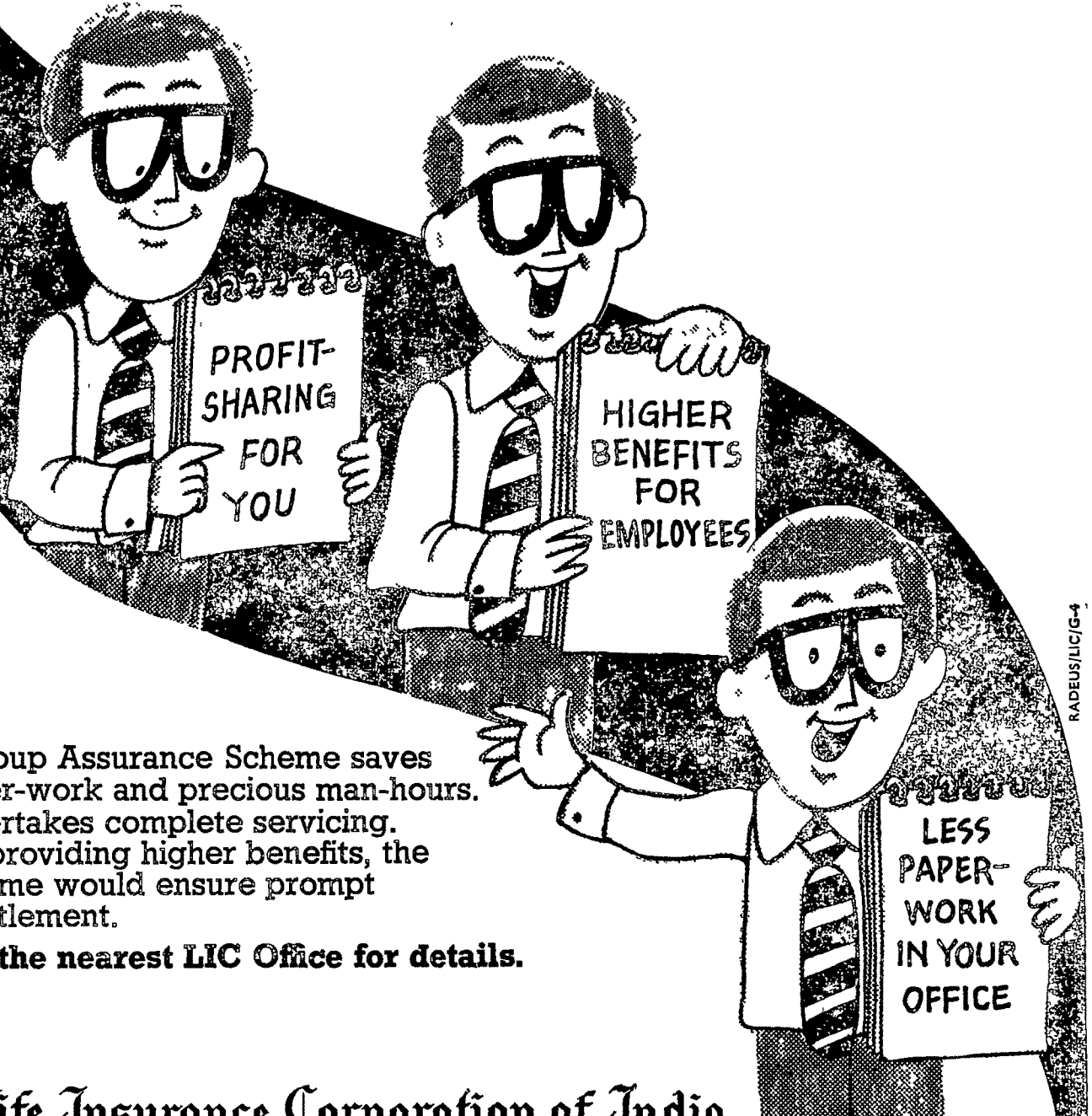
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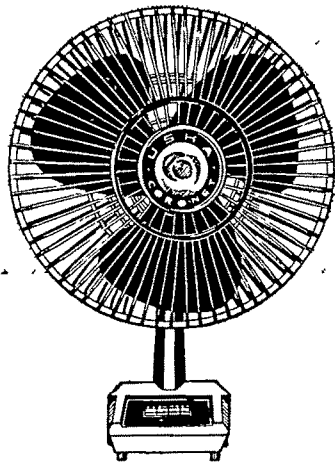
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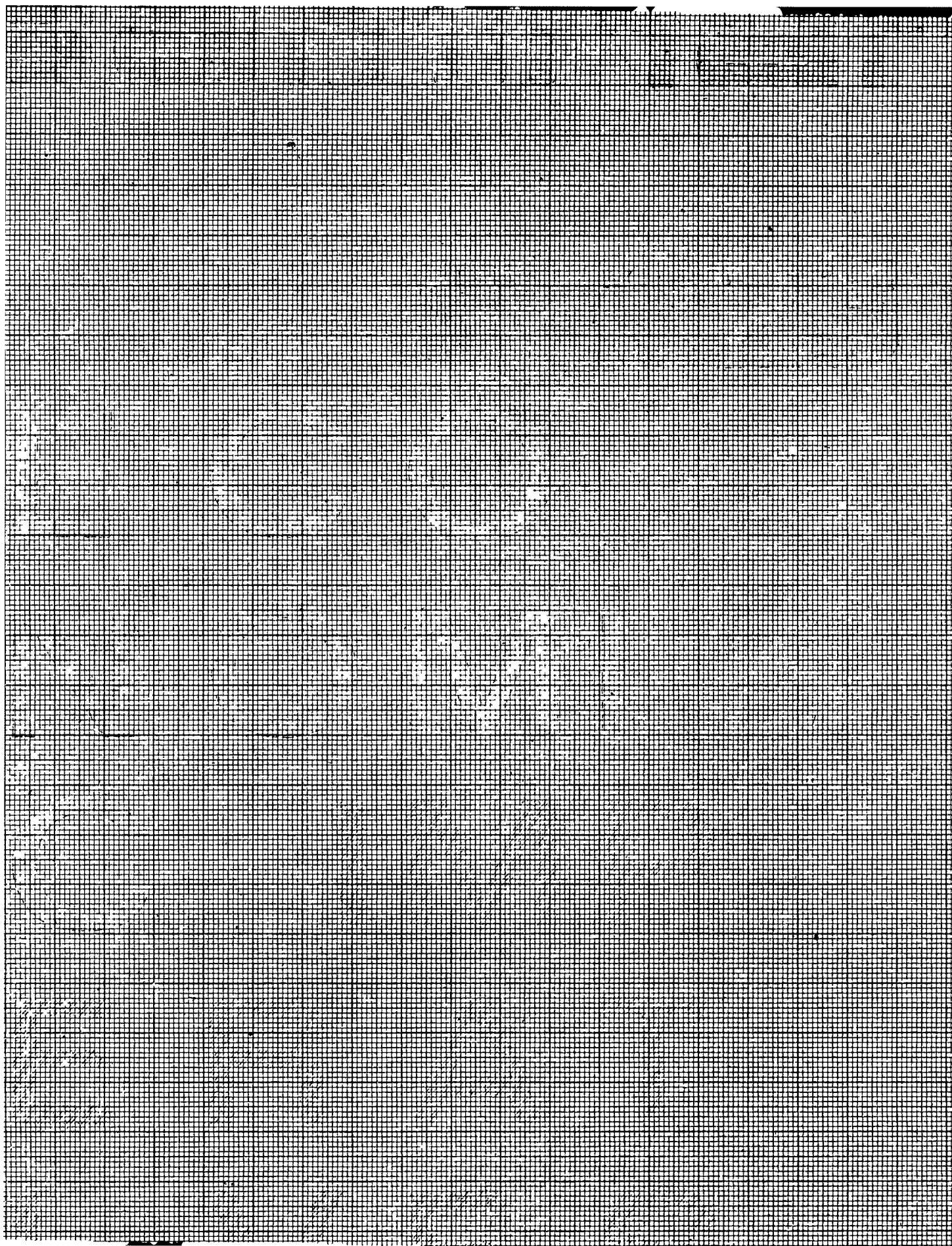
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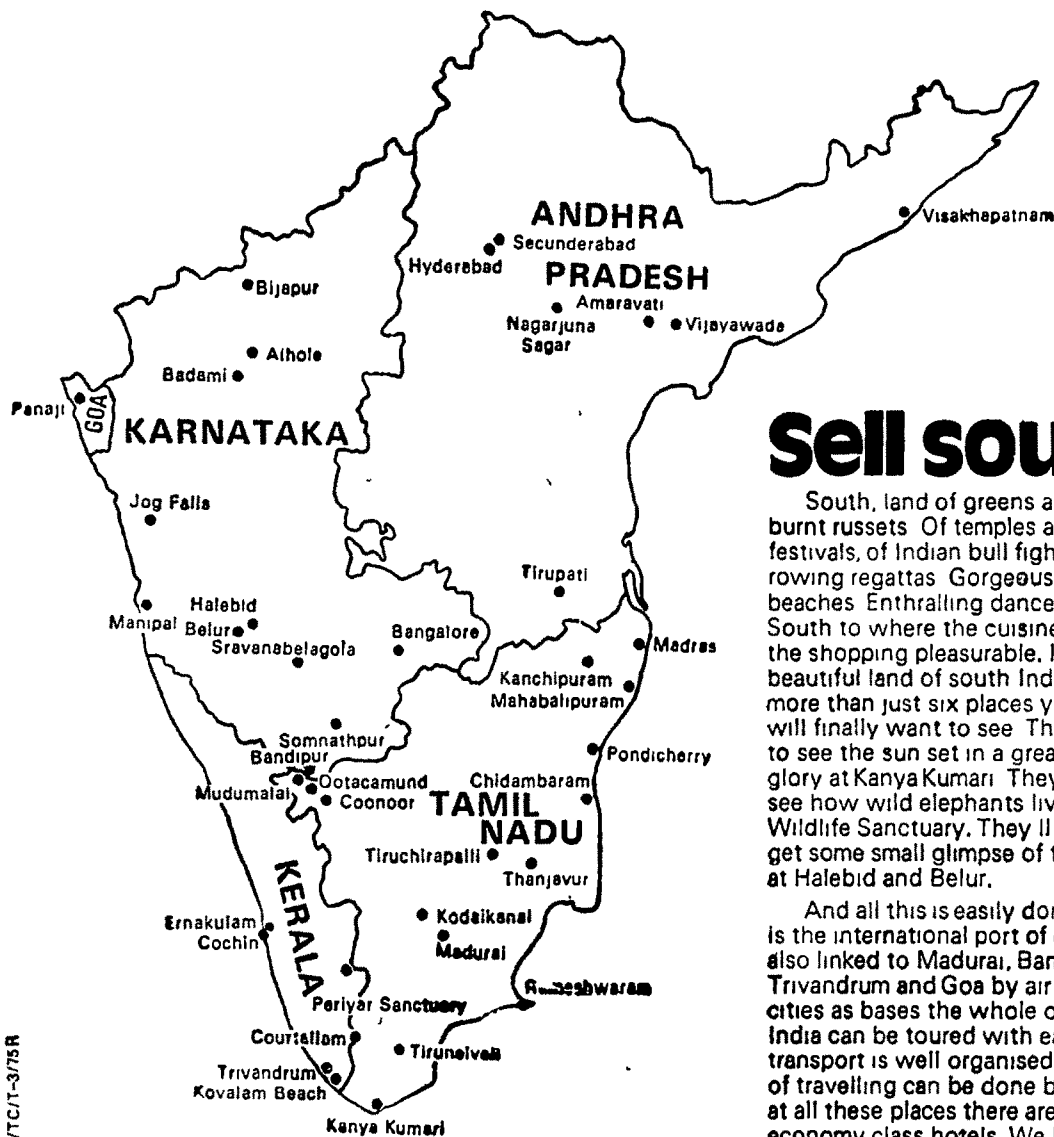


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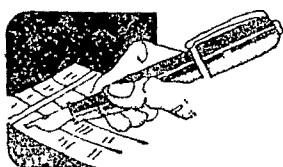
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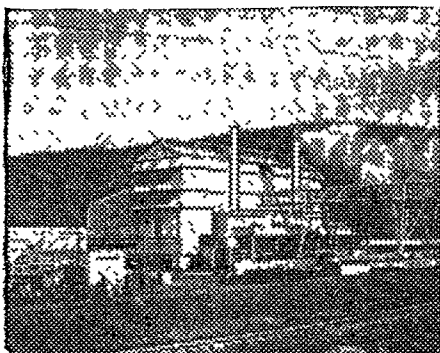


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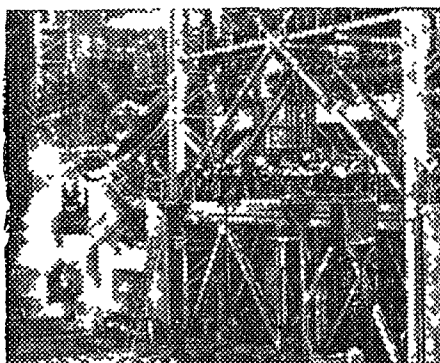


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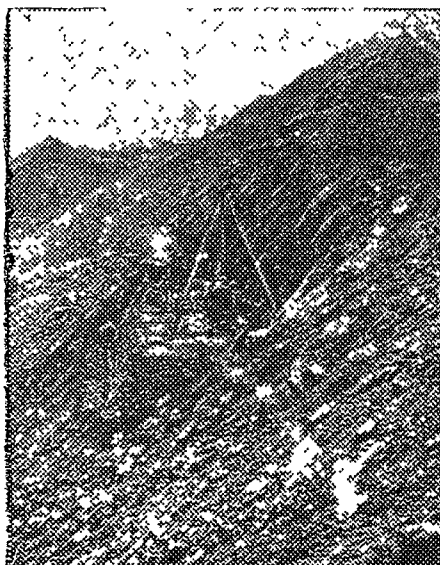
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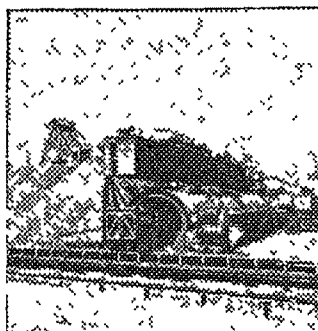
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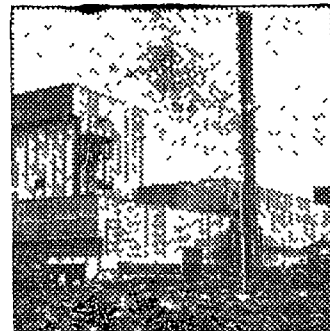
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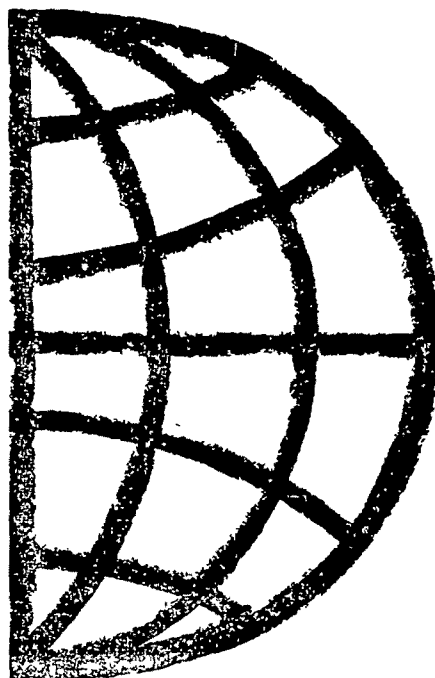


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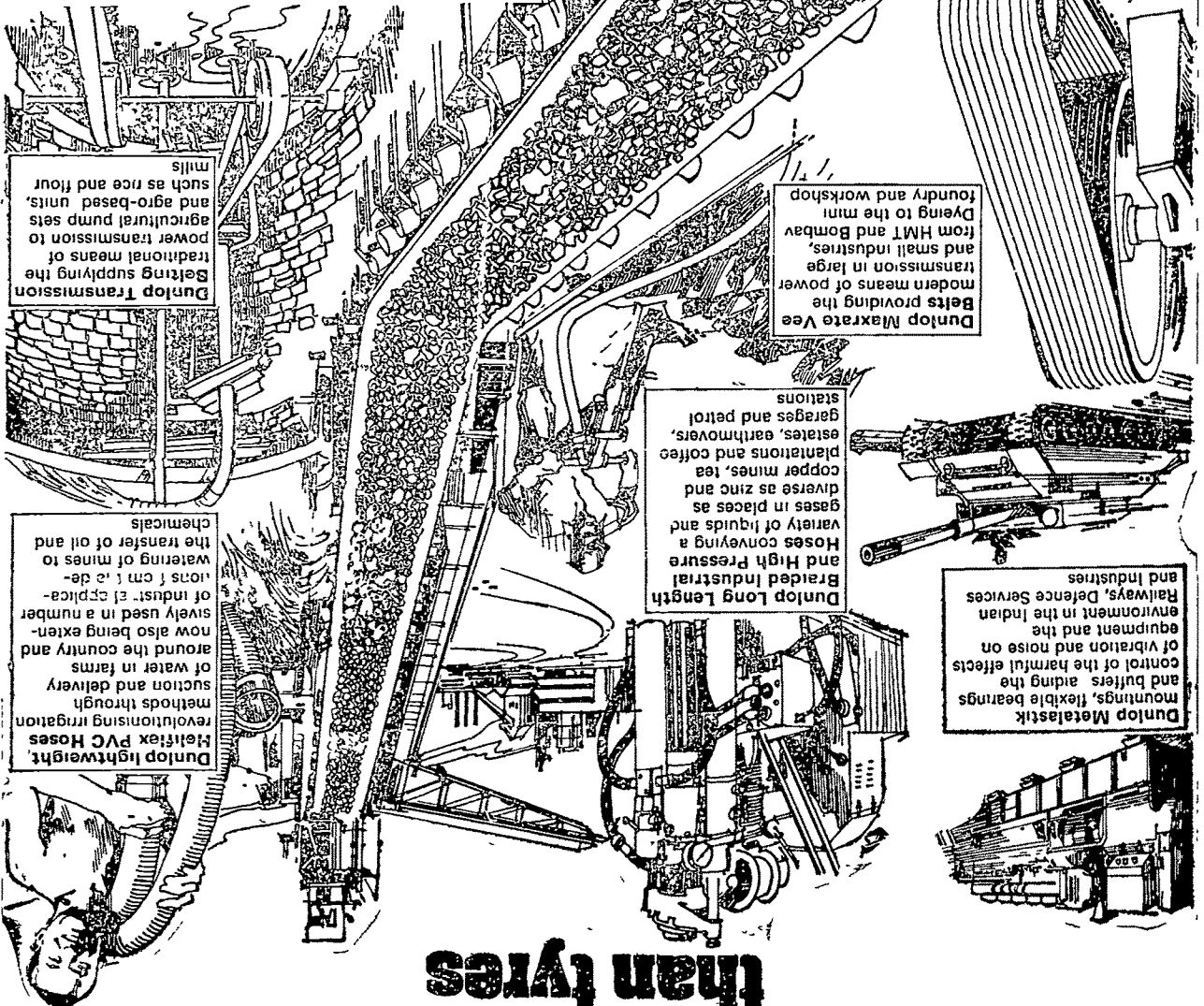
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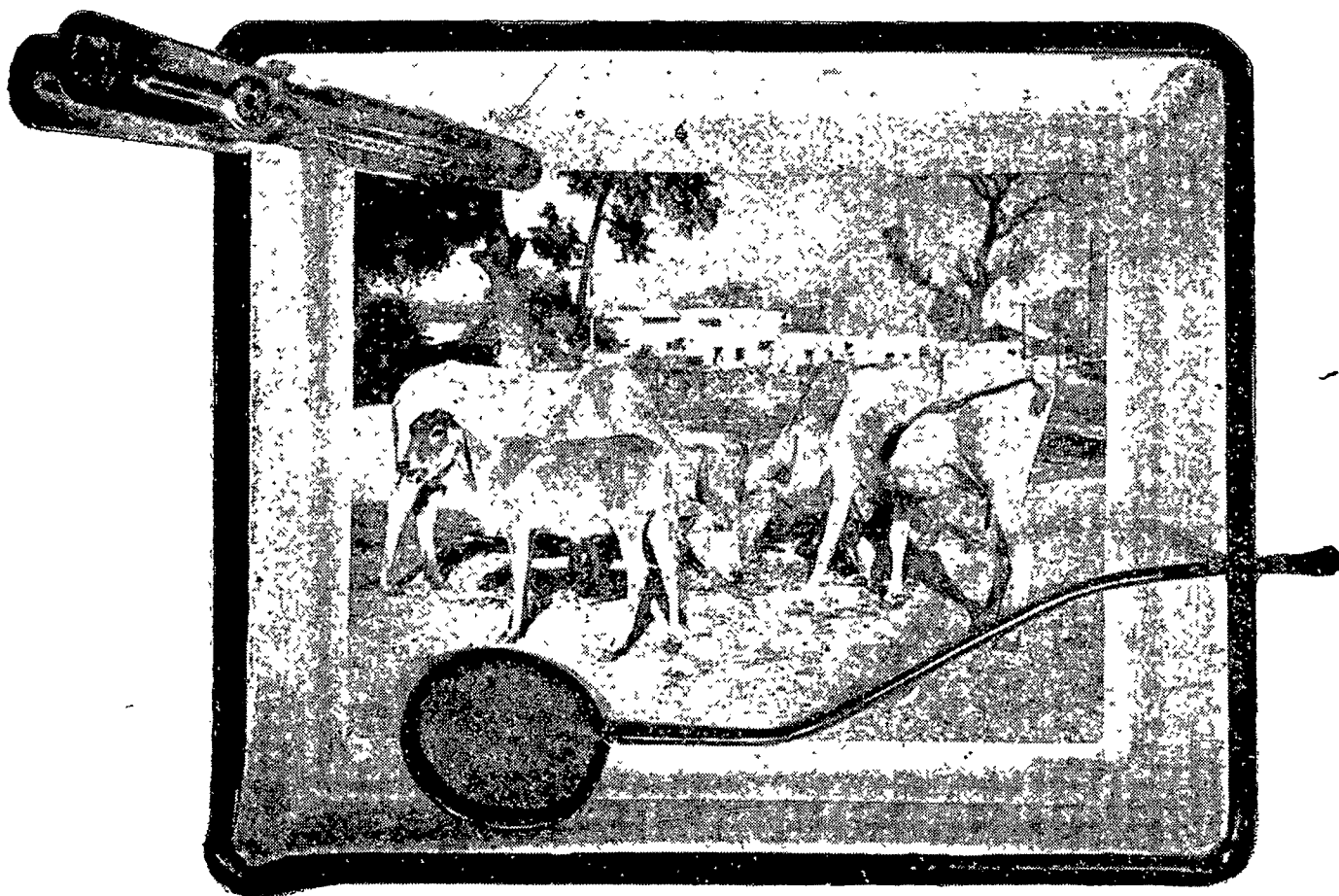
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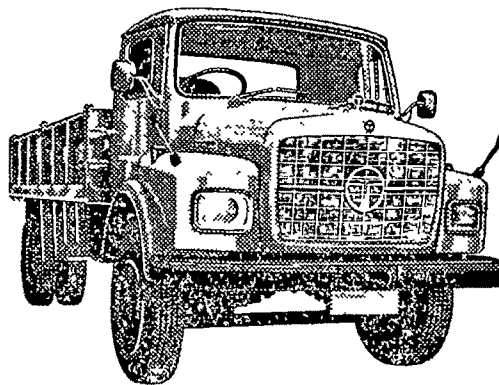
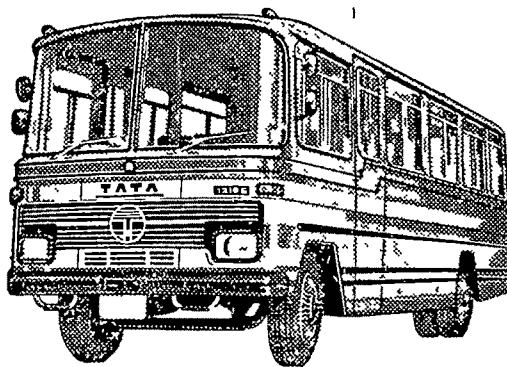
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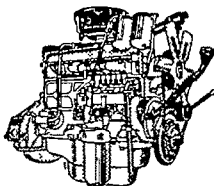
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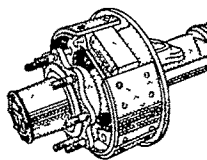


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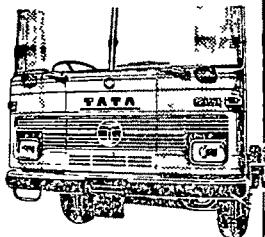


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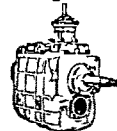
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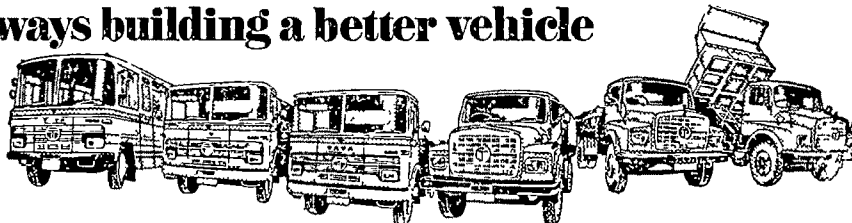
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editor/ROMESH THAPAR

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a symposium
on some
development priorities

symposium participants

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Central Bank of India

EXPANSION OF EMPLOYMENT

Charat Ram, Industrialist

EXPERIENCES AND OPTIONS

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Delhi School of Economics

BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

L.K. Jha, Governor,
Jammu and Kashmir

A SUCCESS STORY

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A select and relevant bibliography
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COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

THE Indian experience has shown that there have been periods in her long history when heightened emotional waves have moved this country forward or in any other direction much faster than in normal circumstances. One such period was in 1947 when India became free. Another was in 1962 at the time of the Chinese aggression and the most recent one was in 1977 when the Janata Government was voted into power.

The emotional wave of 1947 lasted for about two to three years. At that time political consolidation of the country was uppermost in the minds of the people. They were prepared to make any sacrifice to ensure that India would not be enslaved again. They had strongly resolved that disunity and fissiparous tendencies and the absence of a strong central Government would not be allowed to be the cause of India's misfortune of being an easy prey to foreign attacks. It was against this background that Sardar Patel was able to bring about the total liquidation of the princely order. Such was the weight of public opinion that the princes had no option except to fall in line with his thinking.

Likewise, in 1962 when India was threatened with external aggression from China, she demonstrated her determination through a rare show of unity and sacrifice. Economic considerations were set apart to prepare the country to deter aggression from any quarter. The memories of 1962 can still raise the country to a strong unity of purpose.

The year 1977 had behind it the story of double-standards, an attempt to play fraud on the minds of the people, a strong attempt to impose dynastic rule and a growing disillusionment of the people with slogans and policies that produced no results. People were fed up with falsehood and deceit, and wanted a new government that would allow them to choose their own destiny.

Between 1962 and 1977, various economic forces had started creating distortions in the economy. Spiralling prices, bouts of labour unrest, large-scale increase in smuggling activities, more pronounced use of black money, declining formation of fresh

capital and extensive use of money in elections—these were some of the distortions or the reasons thereof. Economic compromises led to the growth of pressure groups and big business, not bound by any ethics. This became a threatening factor in increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The failure of the economic policies led to desperate political tactics. These were the circumstances that led to the imposition of Emergency in 1975.

With all round failure on the economic front and seething discontent among the public, with rising unemployment among the educated ranks, the imposition of the Emergency was like the last fling of a losing gambler.

It is in this context that one might examine the twenty point economic programme further supplemented by the five point programme. Apart from the crisis of the ruling family, the pressures behind the Emergency were economic, but the fear was of political defeat. Economic disaster was staring the ruling party in the face. There was thus a hurry, born out of desperation and a hasty realisation that if something could be achieved quickly, a way could be found to save a situation that appeared completely dismal. The end came in a period of less than two years. The various points-bound economic programmes were sought to be implemented by stifling dissent and prohibiting the free exchange of ideas and views about their priorities and their relevance. These programmes ended in complete failure, and swept away a political party which had ruled the country for 30 years and which had held a sway over the national life of the country for almost a century. The disenchantment and disillusionment of the masses was so complete that in the industrial, agricultural and commercial belt of the country, the Congress Party was removed lock, stock and barrel.

The Janata Government, though it tried to fix its priorities in a different way, has also gone wrong. It convinced itself that it was voted to power as a result of seething discontent against political oppression and curbing of various freedoms and suppression of democratic functioning. On the other hand, it

would be nearer the truth to make the statement that the Janata Government won a massive mandate for a new value system based on morality, equity and justice—both economic and political. By giving priority to an entirely political direction in administration, it has left those who voted it into power wondering whether the government has any line of action on the economic front and whether it is even capable of enunciating and executing clear-cut economic policies and whether the Janata Government does not appear to be following the path of least resistance and straying into a wilderness that became the undoing of the Congress Party.

Some of the actions taken by the new government at Delhi like the appointment of various committees to indicate solutions for economic problems seem to suggest that the party has shirked its responsibility in taking decisions because it is unable to make up its mind. The economic committees have been filled by retired people or those who were themselves responsible for deplorable failures. These committees have invited opinions from people who are themselves interested parties, and are neither independent, intellectual or investigational nor committed to final pragmatic solutions. These are only administrative committees not accountable to the people or the Parliament.

At best the committees would help in buying time for the government. It would mean that while the leaders of the Janata Party were clear on what had to be done in terms of restoration of democratic freedoms, they were ignorant of what should be done on the economic front. From whichever way one looks at it, it is obvious that, like its predecessor, the new government is shying away from economic problems.

What makes the situation further so unfortunate is that when it is propitious to introduce a new value system, and many people are expected to fully support the measures enthusiastically, nothing worthwhile is done. Such was the pitch of the moral atmosphere that prevailed in the country at the time of self-introspection as for example in 1977, when it was pure folly to relegate solutions of economic

problems to a secondary position.

India's economic problems can be divided into the following areas:

- (i) The problems of the dominant privileged classes comprising monopoly houses, large-scale industries, entrepreneurs and those who can command considerable resources.
- (ii) The problems of organised labour. There has been a direct confrontation between the dominant privileged classes and the organised labour without evolving a consensus and without arriving at an understanding to share the results of joint efforts.
- (iii) The problems of the urban under-privileged. The people of this group fall outside the organised labour and have been drifting away from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment and have been compounding the problems of urban life.
- (iv) The problems created by middle men, money lenders, traders and the other anti-social elements like hoarders, speculators, smugglers, and so on, whose basic approach is to corner movement of essential commodities in short supply through a better and cunning system of intelligence. They have only one motive. That is to become rich overnight, and in the process, they have contributed most to distorting the economic scene and are contributing the most towards sharp increase in prices.
- (v) The problems of the vast majority of the people living in rural areas comprising the land owners with various sizes of holdings, and a very large majority of landless labourers as well as artisans and those involved in cottage industry operations. These people have been subjected to economic discrimination, exploitation and oppression of all types.

Against this scenario of economic problems faced by different sets of peoples, one must search for

priorities and solutions. Right from the time that the Indian National Congress started to take more interest in the economic future of the country, particularly before Independence, Mahatma Gandhi had to evolve a national consensus under which he first identified himself with the problems of the poorest and the lowliest. Through his subtle influence on the Indians in their emotional attitude towards their fellow beings, he prepared them mentally to sacrifice for their less fortunate brothers and sisters. He made everybody wear identical clothes and created an atmosphere of self-sacrifice in the country, under which the erring sections were frowned upon if they indulged in extravagance and ostentation.

This was the legacy before 1947 which if carried forward to its absolute conclusion would have meant continuation of focussing attention on the problems of the poorest and the lowliest in the country and priorities that would have produced tangible results. With initiative slowly shifting into the hands of the entrenched bureaucracy, the politicians lost their sense of direction and values so dearly upheld by Gandhiji. What has emerged thereafter is a compounding of values and an economic situation where, both as a percentage of population and in absolute numbers, more than half the population lives below the poverty line. The economic progress that has taken place has created new privileged groups—whether they be in production or distribution and whether they be big business houses, industrialists, middlemen or organised labour. The large majority in the country are in the unprivileged class—discriminated against and exploited.

One of the reasons why Gandhiji succeeded in creating a proper climate for economic regeneration was his insistence on a free and frank discussion about the validity of his ideas. The Janata Government inherited an economic apparatus which had within it all the contradictions of the last 30 years which the Congress Government had not been able to resolve and consequently had been voted out of power. The Janata Government should have allowed free debate among intellectuals, labour leaders, industrialists, social reformers and entrepreneurs to make them agree to an order of priorities so that the energies of the country would have been bent towards an economic regeneration based on equity and justice.

This consensus should have been pressed forward by making structural changes. It would also have upset many people entrenched in positions of power and status, but the masses of the country would have stood behind the government. The masses are now not prepared to accept the professions of the new government as they find that during the last 11 months the Janata Party has not lived up to even one of its professions on the economic front.

Thus, when the Janata members of Parliament took a pledge at Rajghat in March 1977 that they would follow the path of Mahatma Gandhi, both in

letter and spirit, and live a life of self-abnegation, hopes were aroused in the minds of the people that here was a new political party which would restore the mental and moral balance of the country. A grave economic blunder has already been committed by the government by not living up to the expectations of the people. If there were any pressure groups that stood in the way of the Janata Government from allowing them to implement any structural changes, the public opinion was on their side to ignore the pressures and to go ahead in an atmosphere that was so favourable.

The failures of the various five-year plans lay largely in the fact that these could not involve people at the grass-roots level. Another reason was the lack of communication between those whom the plans were expected to benefit and those who were to execute the plans. Instead of talking of economic problems and their solutions, all that the government keeps on harping about is that political democracy has been restored. India would not have been able to get back its freedom, if political democracy was not akin to the genius of its vast population. Gandhiji spent more time of his life planning and organising the economic amelioration of the masses than matters of political interest.

This is the lesson to be learnt from him. He considered economic uplift to be higher in his priorities. When Gandhiji succeeded, entirely through his own communication system with the masses, in fixing the mental focus of the country towards greater emphasis on economic priorities, he did not have the advantage of an administrative apparatus supporting him. India had not then become free.

However, the process of self-introspection released by the forces in 1977 has still not spent its full force. It may last another year or so. There is still time for the government to take up consideration of economic issues as its first imperative, open them for national debate, and then move fast to implement the consensus arising out of exchange and cross-fertilisation of ideas. There would be voices of dissent but so long as 90 per cent of the people in this country can be taken care of by making the administration bend its energies towards their problems and amelioration, the credibility of the new government would be restored.

The present position is that instead of the leaders of the Janata Party providing a sense of direction to the administration, through clarity in thinking about economic goals to be achieved, the bureaucracy is guiding the new government in its economic priorities, or the lack of them. There is always an unwritten understanding between the dominant privileged classes and the administration and it is that understanding which is being cemented. There is still time in which the masses will respond. They would, however, be able to give their judgement in another election in case their aspirations are not fulfilled.

D. V. TANEJA

Expansion of employment

CHARAT RAM

'EXPANSION of gainful employment' has been the dominant goal of successive governments of our country since independence. This terminal goal is entirely non-controversial, and in operational terms encompasses all others that may be termed sub-goals, such as providing adequate availability of goods of mass consumption and basic necessities, price stability, equitable distribution, self-reliance etc. Expansion of employment is inevitably linked to the expansion of production and related services, which in turn is entirely dependent on the demand and consumption of the various citizen groups. Planning for expansion of employment has thus to be anchored to demand and consumption requirements, present and prospective, of the citizen

The pace of economic development in India, particularly during the last decade, judged from either the national requirements point of view, or from the performance standards of the many countries which have done well by their people, must be considered to be disturbing. The per capita availability of even the

goods of mass consumption and basic necessities, has been largely stagnant or has grown at a pace which would require 50 years and more to provide even the lowly acceptable consumption standards for the people.

The gap between what we must produce and what we do produce has become chronic. Labels attached to the governments of the day, such as the Nehru government, the Indira government, or the Janata government, have little relevance for the people — for them it is just a continuing state of 'government vs the people'. Successive governments have been lulled by their own promises of prosperity, invariably unfulfilled, and the country has passed through years of drift and of economic crisis.

The economic goals enunciated by various governments from time to time, such as price stability, adequate availability of goods, of primary and secondary mass consumption, expansion of gainful employment, self-reliance, etc., have eluded achievement. It is difficult to reconcile such a situation in a

country which is endowed in abundance with all the sinews of economic growth — human, agricultural, mineral, industrial etc., — resources which few countries of the world could match.

Will things improve in the future? There is no straight answer. Many of the uncertain factors flow not from the whim or caprice of nature, or the malice of the opposition, but from government's own management inability in choosing a road which could lead to success, and in mustering the courage to follow unpopular courses. The result of failure to take hard decisions today, when there is little cushion left by way of public patience, can be far more disastrous than in the past.

All the meticulous planning for expansion of employment, investment and production, and demand and consumption, would become entirely wasteful, if the citizen did not have the means, the necessary 'purchasing power' on hand for the goods he needs, even if the goods were available in abundance. The 'purchasing power' of the citizen has been eroded to dangerous levels during the last decade, and hence the inescapable slack in investment, production and employment. Planning of economic development for the expansion of employment would thus, in my view, call for action in the following order:

- Determination of priorities within the various 'demand and consumption groups', for the planning process.
- Arresting decline in the 'purchasing power' of the citizen, and a plan for increase in the same.
- Investment in gainful production

To reiterate, the achievement of our basic goal of expansion of gainful employment would require the priorities identification of demand and consumption groups, expansion of real purchasing power of the citizen, and investment in gainful production facilities. Any other course would be economically counter-productive.

Priorities for Investment

1. The priorities to be accorded to the various demand or consump-

tion groups for investment in gainful production should be in the following order:

- Mass consumption and basic necessities group.
- Import substitution group.
- Export markets group.

The mass consumption and basic necessities group must clearly receive overriding priority for investment of resources and organisation for reasons of political stability and mass social satisfaction. Obviously, it means a major emphasis on food, clothing, shelter, education, medicine, and various basic necessities. This is not a decision for agriculture or for industry, or even for light industry as opposed to heavy industry. Industry there will be, but it is industry which supplies the basic consumption requirements of the citizen, directly and indirectly. Behind improved agriculture lie fertilizer plants and the chemical industry, well designed agricultural implements and pumping sets, and an efficient transport system, etc., and hence steel. Housing, textiles, bicycles, shoes, and other similar items of necessities, receive concurrent attention.

The production growth rate plan for requirements of this consumer group, in addition to taking care of population expansion, must also provide for adequate increases in the present consumption standards of the citizen. This would call for a production growth rate of at least 10% per year in physical terms. In my view, this growth rate is entirely achievable if the populist approach to the solution of various economic problems is replaced by the acceptance of hard and unpopular options, a great many of the oriental countries have successfully achieved, year after year, these rates of economic growth.

Import Substitution

2. While the mass consumption and basic necessities products group is to be accorded priority in development planning on account of requirements of political stability and social satisfaction, the 'Import Substitution Products Group' offers more than any other products group, the surest and the most stable area for expansion of production and

employment opportunity. If a fraction of the resources and organisation deployed in export promotion had been provided to 'import substitution' based development, our production and employment expansion would have been more widespread, faster and more stable. India's imports are currently valued at about Rs. 5,000 crores per year. Excluding the somewhat inescapable imports of petroleum and farm group products, our imports would still be over Rs. 2,000 crores per year, this large volume of imports is composed of products of industry covering steel/related products, mechanical machinery/equipment, electrical machinery/equipment, chemical/pharmaceutical products, textiles/related materials, papers/related materials, etc etc., all of which could and must be substituted by manufacture within the country on a time bound basis.

Advice received from foreign agencies and institutions has always emphasised the development of export based industries as against import substitution based industries. Foreign counsels in my view are heavily biased in favour of the economic interests of the counselling countries rather than of India's economic interests. The industries set up in our country over the years, extensive in depth and spread both, produce goods which were earlier imported. The pace of this import substitution process should never have been slackened, and must now be planned at a faster pace. There is just no other area of production which would provide as much assured employment expansion with stability as 'Import Substitution'. It is suggested that as a starting point, a high level 'National Import Substitution Board' be set up with wide terms of reference and authority.

Export Promotion

3. Export promotion has over the years received increasing levels of resources and State support. How self-reliant have our export industries become? The time has now arrived I believe for developing export not on the basis of continuing State subsidies and support, but on making the foundations of India's exports industry strong and internationally competitive. Some of the following measures are considered

essential for making the export industry self-reliant and competitive.

- Elimination of all tax burdens imposed on raw materials, components, and finished goods of industry. As of now, there are taxes, and taxes on taxes, with an inevitable escalating multiplier effect on costs of production.
- Making basic raw materials/components available at international prices, domestically or by importation.
- Modernisation of production facilities by permitting free importation of best available plant, equipment, and technology.

Indian industry must and can compete in world markets on its own strength without any State subsidies — what the national industry needs is the elimination of the special disabilities it has to contend with vis-a-vis its international competitors.

Purchasing Power

4. It has been mentioned earlier that all the meticulous planning of demand and consumption, and investment and production, would become entirely wasteful if the individual and the corporate citizen did not have the means, the 'purchasing power' on hand, notwithstanding all their needs and free availability of goods. There has been a steep decline in the real incomes and purchasing power of the citizen during the last decade on account of high prices and high taxes levied year after year, the statistics of inflation and loss of purchasing power of the rupee are only too familiar to be recounted. Each level of government authority, the national, the State, and the local, take their pound of flesh every year in the sacrosanct name of development; by now they all have left the citizen with bare bones. Development planning based on high taxes and high prices has cost the nation dearly already in deprived employment opportunity. It would be futile to expect any growth in production or employment opportunity if the decline in the purchasing power of the citizen is not arrested, and a steady increase in real incomes not planned for.

For the stabilization of real incomes, and planning for some increase in them without causing inflationary pressures, I believe that the raising of the income tax limit to about Rs 20 000 and adjustment of tax rates at each slab would economically be the most viable way. While the figure of tax exemption limit may look horrifying but adjusted to the exemption limits of a decade ago and the rate of inflation, this may not be as unrealistic. A reduction of excise duties on a 'selective' basis, for industries which would lead to some reduction in the cost of living, and lead to a higher primary and secondary employment opportunity, should also be undertaken. While there could indeed be some decline in State revenues on this account, it is my view that State revenues could be maintained or even somewhat increased as a consequence of the resultant expansion of demand and production.

So far as the corporate citizen, viz, the industry is concerned, it is now an accepted policy of the government that all industry must generate its own resources. This implies adequate return on investment, to attract continuing levels of new investment for growth requirements of the industry. This necessity of adequate return on investment applies to State owned enterprises no less than to other enterprises, unless State entry into industry is planned through overt and covert fiscal provisions not available to industry run by the people. That the present concepts of return on investment are inadequate, is amply demonstrated by the increasing sickness in all sectors of the industry whether large, medium or small. The log books of financial institutions are full of case histories of enterprises unable to pay even interest, not to speak of repayment of loans, the underwriters are increasingly becoming undertakers of industrial enterprises. The tide must clearly be turned.

Investment, production, and employment must follow as the night the day, if mature and courageous attention is paid to priorities of demand and consumption groups, and bold decisions taken for expansion

of real purchasing power of the citizen. The goals are abundantly clear, policies and their implementation which have led to failure in the achievement of national goals in the past have to be identified to avoid their recurrence. The fundamental goal remains the 'expansion of gainful employment opportunity'.

Small Scale Industry

5 'Small Scale Industry' provides probably the single largest area for expansion of employment opportunity. In most of the industrially advanced countries, such as Japan, Germany, the USA etc., the small scale industry provides the basic foundations for the large scale industry. In Japan, whose industrial virtues all of us extol, 95% or more of industrial enterprises are in the small scale sector, employing less than 50 persons each. The development of the small scale industries sector has been an integral part of our country's planning process, and organised efforts to promote this group of enterprises has been made for years now through programmes of special facilities and incentives.

The Ministry of Industry's annual report showed a growth rate of 18% in 1976-77 in this sector as compared to the previous year — and the report indicated that 33% of the units were located in backward areas and 15% in Rural Industries Projects Areas. A good part of the growth of small scale industry has been through the development of ancillary industries which impart support and strength to the nation's industrial sector. The number of ancillary units has increased from 7,000 in 1970-71 to over 26,000 in 1975-76. The present government has to be congratulated for re-emphasising the importance of the role of the small scale industry.

However, certain pitfalls have clearly to be guarded against. While the policy of progressive reservation for the small scale industry has merit, the vast reservation recently announced is likely to do, in my opinion, grave injury to the economy. There is the danger, and, in fact, a distinct probability of the country being faced with a situation of one group of entrepreneurs not being allowed to manu-

facture certain goods, and the other group of entrepreneurs not being able to manufacture them, with the inevitable consequences of shortages, price rises, and decline in quality standards — the sufferer inevitably being not the large scale entrepreneur but the typical citizen.

While considerable attention has been paid to provide finance on easy terms, and raw materials allocation etc., to the small scale enterprises, weakness in the most critical area, viz., management and organisation is endemic, it is in this area now that a determined thrust needs to be made; the man with money has to be supported, if not substituted, by the man with education and knowledge. Any survey of the small scale industry will reveal that only a small percentage of them would be employing either a qualified engineer or a qualified accountant, both of them so important in any small scale enterprise. I wish to make the suggestion in all seriousness that the employment of at least one diploma engineer and one commercial graduate be made an essential prerequisite for the recognition of any small scale industry. This regulation, far from hurting the enterprise financially, would indeed strengthen the technical and commercial base of the enterprise, leading to improvement in production, quality, costs and profits. It could of course incidentally open up massive employment avenues for the unemployed engineers, accountants and other levels of qualified men.

Finally, the current financial limits for recognition of small scale enterprises which were fixed many years ago, now need to be revised to a figure of at least Rs. 25 lacs if not more, to take care of the steep escalations in cost of capital assets that have taken place during the last decade.

Power Availability

6. Power availability is now a major constraint in the expansion of production and employment. The time has come for having a new look at our present day concepts pertaining to the 'power industry'. As of now, these concepts are based on imported American and Russian patterns of 'gigantism' and 'centralism'. Beyond a point, if all costs

to the consumer and the society are truly accounted for, the curve of economies of scale declines. Unfortunately, we are not able to free ourselves from imported concepts which tie us up in the pedantic application of mathematical symbols and shifting terminology, and pretend to be able to provide all the answers to the problems of development, not the least of these concepts pertain to the economies of scale. It is general technical knowledge that thermal efficiency in power plants differs by not more than a few per cent in modern well designed plants, as between the giant sized plants and the comparatively smaller plants. Measure these assumed production economies of a few per cent against the very large losses in conveying the power to the small consuming points hundreds of miles away, and the very high level of operational and maintenance skill required for them.

In the power crisis which the nation has been recurrently plagued with all the time, enterprises having captive power plants have been able to maintain production uninterruptedly. In the 30s and the 40s, most sugar factories, textile mills, jute mills etc., had captive power plants as a routine in planning of their enterprises, and they were far less vulnerable than the enterprises based on our latter day concepts of 'gigantism' and 'centralism'. The government is hearteningly planning for mini-cement plants now, and one hopes that this concept would be extended to power and other industries as well. All in all, taking into account the problems of personnel, organization and many other problems inherent in the large centralised power plants, the encouragement of captive power plants by enterprises requiring about 2000 kw or more should in my view become an element of national policy.

The low capacity utilization and down time of the power plants operated by the State electricity boards has been a matter of continuing national concern. There is an organisational adjustment which would in my opinion considerably alleviate the problem. This pertains to the separation of management

responsibilities of power generation and power distribution functions, since these two operations have nothing whatsoever in common. Serious consideration should be given to the setting up of independent 'power generation boards' and 'power distribution boards' in the States.

Housing

7. Public works programmes for strengthening of infrastructure for agriculture and industrial development, such as approach roads, irrigation and drainage facilities, housing etc., offer extensive and sustained employment opportunity, directly and indirectly. The emphasis which I want to place here however is on 'housing', since on the one hand it provides vast scope for employment, and on the other fulfils one of the basic needs of the people, viz., shelter. Construction of houses needs neither any foreign know-how, nor any foreign capital; and houses based on traditional designs would call for minimal requirement of steel and cement, both of which can and must be substituted in greater measure by local building materials.

With unlimited availability of land, labour, building materials etc., it is difficult to reconcile the contradictory situation of housing shortages and high rents all over the country, these are higher in India than even in the developed countries. The answer to the problem would seem to be simple enough, and again requiring courage and boldness. Profiteering in land by the State has to be given up and building materials made cheaper — and a re-examination made of the various rent regulations and taxation on houses, all of which should become more incentive-weighted in favour of massive house building programmes.

Considering the national and international trend of population movements from the rural to the urban areas, some of the provisions of the Urban Land Ceiling Act also call for an urgent reviewal, with a view to defreezing the house building activity which has gone into cold storage. The present patterns of regulations in this area are indeed hurting both employment and the

satisfaction of social needs. This is an area which appears easiest for putting in full gear for a large expansion of employment opportunity.

Delays

8 The pride of place from amongst the multifarious problems which continually dog our path of production and employment expansion, is taken by what may be termed as 'the delay syndrome'. The delay syndrome has gripped the country like cancer with fast spreading tentacles in the system. This covers delays in the choice of the entrepreneur, delays in the approval of projects by the multifarious ministries and institutions, delays in the allocation of foreign exchange, delays in approving rupee financing arrangements, and what have you

The government looks upon with suspicion at every entrepreneur, and final decisions are delayed not for months but for years. It is less important as to whom the State allots the task for the development of a particular enterprise, than that the development must proceed apace without delay. It may be that the State wishes to experiment extensively with owning, managing, and operating various limbs of the industry and trade, for gaining experience in commercial success and failure. But the State must discharge its responsibility early of deciding on the agency, whether managed by the State or the people, which has to be allotted the task of development of a particular enterprise. This may sometimes be a hard decision to make in the face of contradictions of economic and political realities — an unavoidable decision to make nonetheless.

Delays over the years have proved costly already in terms of lagging employment opportunity and rising prices — delays self-defeating in terms of achievement of socialistic or social goals. The prime emphasis must now be on 'cutting delays'. A lowly or a highly placed person in the political or administrative apparatus casually causes a delay of two years or more in giving clearances for new projects, without batting an eyelid — and of course without fear of being hurt in any manner whatsoever. The Law Commission has added 'economic crimes' to the

traditional list of crimes and offences. Indeed all delays in approvals and clearances of projects by any one, however low or high in the political or administrative apparatus, must be considered anti national in their character, treated as economic crimes, and punished as such.

Trade Unionism

9. What is euphemistically called the industrial relations situation is now becoming another major problem for the maintenance and expansion of production and employment, and as of now, the situation is in an alarming state all over the country. All of us know that there is no genuine trade unionism in our country, all the major trade unions being only arms of one or the other political party. It is imprudent therefore to analyse the current industrial unrest in traditional academic terms. Long term and short term goals of the various political parties have to be appreciated in depth, to have an adequate understanding of the cause of the malaise. It is in this context that the government and the industry must make a reappraisal of the so called industrial relations situation as obtaining in the country now. The situation may indeed call for sterner measures for bringing the situation to heel.

In terms of the goal of employment potential, it is not the wage rate but the employment rate that assumes importance. To the extent that somewhat lower paid productive jobs are created, the strain on resources would reduce. The choice before the economy is becoming increasingly clear. Is it to be a capital intensive high wage development of a narrow base, or a somewhat lower wage, employment oriented development effort? The options are indeed hard in this matter, on account of the powerful labour monopoly prevailing in our country. Clearly, the leaders of the government, the labour, and the industry would need to sit together and find solutions not in terms of their own sectoral interests, but in the long term national interest of expansion of gainful production and employment. While any amount of participative management and other regulations would be acceptable, what would be nationally

unacceptable would indeed be the monopoly pressures on the community for extracting from the community a continually higher share of resources having no relationship to matching productivity levels.

Quality of Management

10. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to make a brief reference to the most important of the structural requirements for success of our employment plans, viz., the quality of management. The importance of mature management over-rides all other factors having a bearing on accelerated economic growth. Good management or leadership, and these are interchangeable terms, is of crucial importance for the success of any collective human endeavour. It is of relevance, not only to business enterprises, but equally to academic institutions, political parties, and most important, to governments. Victor Hugo wrote in his famous book *Les Misérables* that there are no bad men and no bad plants, there are only bad cultivators. Whether we are looking at the end of the 70s, or the 80s, or the turn of a new century, I cannot see how accelerated national economic development is going to come from any source, other than better management and managers. It is in the maturity of leadership of the three critical management groups, viz., the council of ministers, business, and labour, jointly and severally, that we have to place our hopes and confidence for the future.

Socialism has always been one of India's aims and is written into our Constitution, the concentration of economic power which operates to the detriment of people is likewise a defect, which is specifically rejected by our Constitution. It is in the perspective of this heightened social and political emphasis that the political, the labour, and the business manager have to view the challenges and the opportunities in the national economic development.

We have witnessed in the last year what could truly be termed as a peaceful political revolution through the democratic process; a revolution which has installed with

a massive support a new leadership in the government; but then attempting to create the future piecemeal, by seizing ad hoc opportunities of cooperation between people could be no substitute for a determined and integrated hard driving plan for the managers of our country and the government.

Of the three management groups referred to earlier, viz., the minister manager, the labour manager and the business manager, the role of the minister manager group is clearly the most important, for it is the government through its ministers that decides on every policy and direction for the country, for achieving the desired levels of economic growth and employment. To the government minister terminally, therefore, goes all the approbation for success, and all the opprobrium for failure of our economic plans. Realistic aims for the year on hand and the years to come is to reverse the down trend in our economy. Increased employment is our overriding national objective and, yet, how does one increase employment without declogging the wheels of policies and procedures which would lead to expansion of production facilities.

With the ever increasing restrictions and regulations on business enterprises in the last decade and more, with an increasing array of don'ts rather than do's, to meet the pressure lobbies within and without the Parliament, how does one hope for an accelerated pace of development and employment which is the crying need of the hour and the day. Insistence of observance of norms of discipline and conduct by various social groups in the country, trusting the people extensively as Gandhiji did, notwithstanding their many recurrent failings and failures, appears to be the only course for achieving the desired success. In all this national effort, the minister manager, the business manager and the labour manager have to act in consort, shedding their past conventional rigidities of attitudes, for the achievement of the targets of our accelerated economic growth. That this hope would be achieved to any reasonable extent is indeed a question mark.

Experiences and options

MRINAL DATTA-CHAUDHURY

I

IN writing at the present moment on the problem of the Indian economy, one is almost forced to paint in bold strokes on a large canvas. There are several reasons for this. One, the new government at the Centre is talking about making a sharp break with the past and evolving a new strategy of development; and it is necessarily still at the stage of broad priorities rather than detailed plans. But more important, the overwhelming impression the Indian economy presents today is of stagnation without any sense of direction or visible impulses for growth. This calls for a critical examination of the behaviour of the economy in the recent past in order to understand the strategic opinions before us today.

During the last three decades, the State has played an important role in influencing the pattern of the economic development of the country. Apart from the large public sector, which it directly manages, the government, through a variety of direct and indirect controls, has been regulating the private sector to a considerable extent. But there are good reasons to believe that the Indian economy is entering an altogether new phase in its development process. What were earlier perceived to be the constraints on the growth of the economy seem to

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be giving way to a newer set of constraints. The role that the State can play may be no less significant in this new phase, but the mechanism of regulations and the institutions supporting them may need drastic change.

To the extent that any prognostication regarding the future has to be built on an analysis of the past, it is fortunate that the country has accumulated a vast amount of experience and data during the last quarter century of its experiments with planned economic development. It is possible to study in a systematic manner how policy issues were posed in the past, and how the system tried to tackle its problems.

In the next section we shall try to outline how the development issues were perceived by the planners and policy-makers in the past and how, based on these perceptions, the development strategies were chosen. In the third section, we shall try to evaluate the extent to which the planners were correct in assessing the problems and the opportunities facing them. The other purpose is to demonstrate how, in the process of meeting one set of goals, the system created new problems. Hopefully, in the process, we shall be able to bring out some of the problems and opportunities facing society today.

Finally, in the last section we shall try to outline the choices open to the Indian economy in the next phase of its development. In the process of doing that, we shall also try to outline the possible roles the different institutions can play in shaping the future pattern of the development of the economy.

II

What were the essential components of the different development strategies chosen by the Indian planners at the different stages of the country's development experience of the last quarter century?

It is important to bear in mind that when a particular strategy is chosen, others are rejected and certain priorities regarding objectives and goals are implicit in the choice.

Reading through the volumes of the plan documents prepared in the past, one often gets the superficial impression that there were no important choices to be made and every conceivable social objective was sought to be achieved to the maximum possible extent. One repeatedly comes across expressions like 'balanced development', 'inter-sectorally balanced' and 'regionally balanced'. Targets were set for aggregate income, savings and investments, for the sectoral composition of investments and outputs, for employment and for exports, imports and balance in the external account.

While reading these exercises, it is even possible to forget that India is a mixed economy and that the share of the government in the generation of the Gross Domestic Product was below ten per cent throughout the period being discussed. Although the direct investment made by the public sector accounted for more than half of the aggregate investment during most of the period, the bulk of the economic activities were in the private sector, which the government tried to regulate through a variety of direct and indirect controls. Therefore, for obvious reasons, the areas which the government controlled by direct investment allocation in the public sector and by preventing entry in the private sector (through a direct exercise of controls) felt the impact of the chosen planning strategy more seriously than the other indirectly regulated or unregulated areas.

It is important to remember this because all kinds of targets were set, but some of these were more serious than the others. In fact, in trying to elicit the implicit goals and the priorities of a chosen development strategy, a whole lot of targets (e.g., those relating to aggregate income, savings, employment and varieties of activities in the unorganized sector) need not be taken too seriously. On the other hand, the organized sectors of manufacturing and mining, foreign trade and the public investments in manufacturing and in infrastructure did reflect the essential priorities set by the system.

For the purpose of identifying distinct development strategies, it is useful to distinguish two clear phases in the country's development experience in the last 25 years. The first phase covers the decade 1955-65 and the other phase the next ten years. The period prior to 1955 was actually a period of preparation for planned development: the first five year plan was just a collection of a number of public investment programmes in irrigation, power and certain other infrastructural facilities couched in a frame of simple macro-economic projections using some expected savings rates and incremental capital-output ratios.

It was only with the preparation of the second five-year plan in the mid-fifties that a proper search for a suitable development strategy began. The strategy adopted at that time was based on a number of clear assumptions about the structure of the Indian economy and the opportunities facing it.

First of all, it was assumed that without a massive programme of industrialisation, the Indian economy could not be moved out of backwardness and poverty. It was felt that the only way of providing gainful employment for the country's growing number of unemployed and underemployed in the long run was in the development of manufacturing industries and in the associated trade and service sectors.

It was further assumed that it was possible to raise the rate of savings to the desired extent by appropriate policy measures and that there would not be any difficulty in regulating the pace and the pattern of investments in the different sectors of the economy.

The only problems of immediately moving on to a higher growth path was to convert the savings to the required investment goods — machinery and equipment. Generally speaking, moving on to a high growth economy would necessarily change the commodity structure of demands in the economy. If the pattern of production could not be changed

quickly, the only way out was the possibility of transformation *via* foreign trade. And here came the crucial assumption of the model, that the exportables from India were facing inelastic demand in the world market; hence, export-earnings could not be expanded substantially.

Therefore, the immediate task was to expand the domestic production capacities in the capital and intermediate goods industries. Along with the easing of the supply constraints due to producers' goods, the expansion of other industries could be undertaken. The problem of marketing these products, it was felt, should not arise, because the foreign competitors of similar products could be eased out of the domestic market.

This was the essential logic of the development strategy underlying the second and the third five-year plans. These plans carried out a high investment programme with particular emphasis on metallurgical industries like steel and aluminium, heavy engineering industries for producing industrial machinery, power generators and transport equipment, heavy chemicals like caustic soda and soda ash, in addition to continuing with multipurpose river projects and other infrastructural investments. Even though this phase of planning had begun with the substantial foreign exchange reserve, very soon a serious balance of payments crisis developed, because the new projects had high import contents and long gestation lags. The government reacted by imposing import bans and foreign exchange rationing. This gave the private sector the incentive for import-substitution in consumer goods, particularly to meet the demand for these goods by the high-income groups.

In retrospect, it seems, the policy-makers were perhaps correct in assessing the difficulties of expanding India's export earnings in the 1950s. Given the structure of India's exports at that time — mainly traditional items like jute, tea, mineral ores etc.—any export promotion programme based on this category of

exportables could only have limited success. Where they were totally unrealistic was in assessing their own ability to regulate the consumption-saving balance and the process of resource allocation in the private sector of the economy. The policy instruments mainly relied upon — the licensing and the quota restrictions — were thoroughly inadequate for performing that kind of a regulating job in a market economy.

When a serious balance of payments crisis developed in the mid-sixties, compounded by two successive years of drought and crop failure, the planning process was suspended for a while. Serious investment planning in India never recovered from that collapse. A new strategy of development was evolved at that stage, based on the immediate experience of drought and the foreign exchange crisis. The two components of the development strategy followed by India after the mid-sixties were (a) the expansion of the output of foodgrains as quickly as possible and (b) export promotion. In other words, food production and foreign exchange earnings were given priority over all other development objectives.

It was felt that due to the high priority given to the industrialisation programme in the earlier phase, agriculture was neglected and what was required was a tilt in the opposite direction. Moreover, a tilt in favour of agriculture really meant favouring quick-yielding programmes designed to increase agricultural output, particularly the output of foodgrains. The best way of doing that was considered to be by helping those farmers who were in the best position to increase yield, since the scope for area expansion was rather limited. These farmers were identified as those with assured supply of irrigation water and hence could use the new high-yielding varieties of seeds with adequate fertilizers, pesticides, etc.

Since the researches in plant-genetics were more successful with wheat than with rice, by and large the so-called 'green revolution' gathered momentum in the north-west of India, where the major irrigation projects were completed a

decade earlier. In this area, the average farm size was high and the big farmers could also install private tubewells for irrigating their land with the liberal credit facilities made available to them. They could also use fertilizers and pesticides made available at subsidized prices and install tractors and other modern farm implements. Favourably situated rice-growing areas like certain districts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu also registered impressive gains in yield-rates. But it is important to remember that the programme had its major impact on a selected group of farmers, as it was meant to.

The other component of the development strategy in this phase was export promotion. It was felt that the assumption of 'the stagnant export earnings' made in the fifties was unwarranted. Moreover, the industrialisation drive of the earlier decade had considerably changed the structure of commodity production in the country. Now, newer products from the manufacturing industries could also enter the export market. The year 1965 saw an enormous increase in the export subsidies offered by the Government of India. These subsidies took different forms, often overlapping with one another (e.g., direct cash subsidies, favourable freight charges, import entitlements and draw-back on imported inputs). Later, in June 1966, the rupee was devalued partly in order to rationalise the structure of export subsidies. But within a few months, many of the export subsidy schemes were reintroduced to create additional incentives for exports.

When the emphasis shifted from investment planning for industrialisation and for the creation of an infrastructure to the 'green revolution' and export promotion, naturally the high priority earlier given to increasing the rate of capital formation was abandoned. In fact, the gross domestic capital formation as a fraction of GNP, which had reached its peak in 1965-66 at about 21 per cent, steadily declined in the following years and stood at about 17 per cent in 1969-70.

III

Now let us look at the actual performance of the economy. Between 1951 and 1971 the population grew at the average annual rate of 2.1 per cent. During the same period, the national income (at constant prices) grew at the rate of 3.6 per cent per annum. The average growth rate for the agricultural sector was 3.3 per cent per annum, while the industrial outputs grew at an average annual rate of 6.4 per cent.

The performance of the economy, in terms of the aggregate growth rate, is modest, judged either by the 'needs' of the society with a fast-growing population, or in comparison with the performances of other contemporary economies. Later on in the 1970s the economy did not perform any better. The national income continued to grow more or less at the trend rate.

Although the aggregate growth record remained rather poor, there were remarkable measures of success in whatever were the priority sectors in both the phases of development strategies we have described in Section II. The 1955-65 decade saw an acceleration of the pace of capital formation in the economy. During the period an impressive base of infrastructure and of the large scale manufacturing industries was established. At the end of the period the rate of domestic saving and the ratio of net capital formation to the GNP had gone up to 11.3 and 14.0 per cent respectively. The rate of capital formation could move ahead of domestic saving because of the additional resources coming from abroad as loans and aid. Achievement in these areas, which formed the main thrust of the development strategy of the decade, were substantial.

If one looks at the sectoral composition of the growth process during the decade 1954-55 to 1964-65, one finds that the performance of the priority sectors was quite impressive. During the decade the average annual growth rate for the organized manufacturing indus-

tries was 8.3 per cent, for mining construction transport and communication, 7 per cent and for electricity generation and transmission, 13 per cent. If one looks more closely at the production statistics at the disaggregated level, one finds that those industries, which were assigned a crucial role in moving the economy to a higher growth path (e.g., metallurgy, machinery and equipment, heavy chemicals etc.) the performance was really impressive. In the production of iron and steel, aluminium, machine tools, railway wagons, power transformers electric motors, chemical fertilizers, sulphuric acid, soda ash and caustic soda the Indian economy experienced manifold expansion during the decade.

As we have mentioned earlier, the crop-failure and the foreign exchange crisis of the mid 1960s led to a change in the country's development strategy. Perhaps, while talking about the reasons for that change, two other factors should be mentioned. First, India fought two border wars, in 1962 and in 1965. These led to a sharp increase in the military expenditures of the Central Government. Since the surplus generated by the government sector was supposed to play a key role in the adopted strategy of growth through industrialisation, this was a major set-back. Secondly, the climate of foreign aid considerably worsened by the mid-sixties. The substantial inflow of foreign assistance was an important building block in the industrialisation strategy. A foreign exchange crisis with the paramount necessity of importing food for avoiding a major famine in the country put the government in a particularly vulnerable position. For better or for worse, the aid-givers' preferences played a significant role in abandoning the old strategy and adopting a new one based upon, as we have already mentioned, export promotion and a rapid increase in agricultural output.

Devaluation of the rupee and a variety of export incentive schemes helped in pushing a number of old and new products in the export markets. The depressed state of

domestic demands also helped in creating an exportable surplus. The structure of production in the domestic economy had substantially changed by then. A number of new commodities from the manufacturing industries became exportable. Moreover, the closure of the Suez Canal gave some advantage, with respect to transport costs, to Indian manufactures in the Asian and the East African markets. If one compares the composition of Indian exports in the 1950s with that of period following 1965-66, the essential difference between the two phases becomes quite obvious. With hindsight it appears that the Indian policy-makers were not unreasonable in making the assumption of 'stagnant export-earning' in the mid-fifties. It is even possible to argue that the precondition for the growth of Indian exports, of the kind experienced in the post-1966 phase, had to be a 'big-push' in the sphere of industrialisation. This is not to say that the details of the industrialisation drive of the earlier phase were without faults particularly since the economy failed to continue with the momentum of expansion.

As regards the other component of the post-1966 development strategy, namely, the expansion of agricultural outputs, the record is not bad in purely sectoral terms. From 1960-61, the area under cultivation increased in a more or less steady rate, showing over 8 per cent increase in 15 years. But the major expansion came from the increase in the yield per hectare of land achieved after 1966-67. During the eight successive years the yield increased by 25 per cent. These productivity gains were the results of the new strategy of selective emphasis with modern inputs, like chemical fertilizers and high-yielding varieties of seeds. Although from 1955-56 onward, the absorption of chemical fertilizers by Indian agriculture was on the increase, the pace quickened dramatically after 1965.

If one looks at the statistics relating to the different crops, one finds a dramatic success story in the field of wheat production. There were only modest gains with respect to rice, oilseeds, sugarcane and cotton. In the case of jute or pulses, the

picture remained more or less stationary.

We have shown how the priorities were determined for the different sectors of the Indian economy in the different phases of the development experience of the past quarter century. We have described briefly the achievements in the priority sectors. We have also noted that the average growth rate of the net national product during the entire period was of the order of 3 per cent per annum while the population kept on growing at an annual rate of over 2 per cent.

However, we have not said anything so far about the performance of the economy with respect to either the generation of employment or the distribution of income. One faces many difficulties in saying anything in this area with precision. There are conceptual difficulties in measuring employment in an essentially agrarian peasant economy. The demand for labour in agriculture has been subjected to large seasonal fluctuations and the statistics regarding the employment pattern in the rural and the unorganized sectors, which provide gainful occupation for the bulk of the country's labour force, is notoriously inadequate. Similarly, we do not have adequate information about the household distribution of income. Most of the estimates of the distributional characteristics of the Indian economy are based on the National Sample Survey (N.S.S.) figures relating to household consumption. There are important discrepancies between the estimates based on N.S.S. and the national income estimates of the Central Statistical Organisation.

Based on the available data some economists have argued that the distribution of income worsened during the sixties and the early seventies. Some have even gone to the extent of saying that the proportion of the number of people below the subsistence level of income went on increasing during this period. Others have contested this claim. Given the diversity of the economy and the fact that prices rose sharply during this period, it is difficult to arrive at any firm conclusion on that.

Similarly, based on the available data some economists have claimed that in most areas where the green revolution prevailed, the mechanization of the farm operations prevented any substantial increase in the employment opportunities. The reason for mechanization in an essentially labour surplus economy seem to be two-fold. First, given the uncertainties of having to depend on the labour market in the peak seasons and the difficulties of effective supervision over hired labourers, the big farmers found it profitable to buy tractors and even harvester combines. Secondly, since the capital market in the rural areas are underdeveloped, the high profits earned by the big farmers during the green revolution were invested in the farm even in assets yielding low returns.

The available data on the organized sectors of the economy show that the rate of growth of employment was considerably lower than that of output. Anyway, the share of the organized sector in the total economy is so small that, even if more labour-intensive production techniques were chosen, it could not have made much difference to the overall picture of employment in the economy.

Whatever may be the reliability of the various estimates of employment and of income distribution certain broad macro-economic indicators reveal a highly disturbing trend. Although the per capita real income increased by about 20 per cent during the fifteen years between 1960-61 and 1975-76, the per capita availability of cereal and pulses or of cotton cloth actually declined. The decline in the case of cotton cloth was of the order of 10 per cent. When the rates of absorption of such essential items decline in the face of increasing income, there is little doubt as to what happened to the low-income groups. Today there is a large stock of foodgrains and excess capacity in the textile industry coexisting with massive poverty and malnutrition evident all over the country. At the present distribution of income there is insufficient effective demands for these essential items of consumption.

IV

An economist should not be blamed if, looking at the Indian economy today, he notices some classic symptoms of an under-consumptionist stagnation. The government holds over 22 million tonnes of foodgrains as stock. The foreign exchange reserves (excluding gold and SDRs) stand at approximately 40 billion rupees. Apart from shortages in a few commodities (e.g., vegetable oil, pulses and power generation), the production economy presents by and large a picture of excess capacities and excess supplies. Most of the manufacturing industries, notably cotton textiles and engineering, are complaining of insufficient demands. With another good harvest, the government will be in a difficult position to find storage space for foodgrain.

The oligopolistic structure of the organized industries will prevent a fall in the prices of the industrial products. The strong farmers' lobby will prevail on the government to maintain, if not raise, the support price of agricultural commodities and to go for further stock-building. But anyway, the lowering of the prices perhaps, could not do much in generating demands. A massive expansion of the public investment programme can stimulate effective demand, but it is important to see what kind of an investment programme is both desirable and feasible.

Many economists and policy-makers would disagree with the characterisation of the state of the Indian economy as 'under-consumptionist stagnation'. They would cite the past pattern of agricultural production in the country to say that two successive bad harvests could wipe out the entire stock of foodgrains. As regards the balance of payments, they would say that the favourable reserve position today is largely due to the remittances made by the Indian immigrants abroad, particularly from the oil-rich Persian Gulf countries. The present trend of these remittances, according to them, is not likely to continue. Moreover, if the price of gold in the international market falls, as is likely, then much of these transfers may go

into gold smuggling as in the past. Therefore, according to these experts, the assumption that the Indian economy is out of the resource constraints due to food and foreign exchange is unwarranted.

It is, of course, difficult to predict with any great accuracy either the inflow of foreign exchange or the agricultural production. Moreover, given past experience, it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that the Indian policy-makers would show a strong aversion to risks, particularly in these sensitive areas. But in our view, such a degree of risk-aversion is totally unwarranted. Given the high cost of carrying stocks of food-grains, it is wasteful for the Indian economy to carry anything beyond 12-15 million tonnes of food reserve. Moreover, it is extremely important to recognize the new problems which are unmistakably there.

At the end of the last section we presented some significant statistical evidence of the worsening trend in the distribution of income in the country. These seem to indicate that, perhaps, India has entered a phase in its economic development where growth and distributive equity have become complementary social objectives. Even if one disagreed with this notion of complementarity, it is impossible for the political system today to accept the growing income inequalities. At a conservative estimate there are about 20 million people today who are either unemployed most of the year or belong to the category of marginal farmers with holdings below subsistence level. By all indications, the number in this category is growing rapidly; and unless the economy can create gainful employment for this category at a vastly accelerated pace, it would be difficult to maintain the structure of the present society.

The broad policy options before the economy are not difficult to enumerate:

- (a) In the short run, expand substantially the public sector's development outlays.
- (b) In the intermediate run, try to enlarge the foreign market for the Indian products,

particularly for the labour-intensive commodities, and

- (c) in the long run, through land reform and through the development of small industries, restructure the productive economy so as to provide gainful occupation to the large and growing population of the country

Economists tend to talk about the choice among alternative strategy options. India is a large country with varying economic and political compulsions for the different regions and the different sectors of the society. Moreover, as we have argued earlier, the constraints on the growth of the economy have undergone drastic changes, perhaps, for ever. Therefore, the choice problems of the earlier decades, e.g., heavy versus light industries, import substitution versus export promotion, agriculture versus manufacturing, have lost their old relevance. It is fairly clear that the public investments need to be accelerated quickly. It is also fairly clear as to which should be the priority areas for today's public investment programmes.

So far as the organized sector is concerned, electricity generation and fertilizer production are the obvious areas in which investment opportunities are clear. During the last decade, investment in power generation lagged behind schedule leading to severe power shortages throughout the country. There is a clear case for stepping up activities in the Central Indian Coalfields and the thermal power stations in this region. Similarly, the demand for fertilizers is likely to grow particularly if the developmental efforts in the agriculture of the backward areas are stepped up. An inter-industry exercise would reveal the need for investment in cement and other building material industries if the volume of investment becomes higher.

But the real emphasis of today's development programme has to be for the rural economy, particularly in the stagnant regions. These are mostly the rice-growing areas where the technological change of the

last decade did not make much impact. Investments in medium and minor irrigation, in the infrastructure for the development of agriculture and allied services and small industries will have to form the major components of the development programme.

The crucial bottleneck for stepping up any rural development programme lies in the field of organization. In the absence of a proper political and administrative machinery, in most backward areas the benefits of developmental efforts do not reach the intended beneficiaries, namely the poor. The Indian experience of the last quarter century shows that only in those areas, where the poor farmers and the landless labourers are organised to demand jobs and others benefits, has there been some degree of success either with rural works programme or with land reform. Otherwise, the money is inevitably grabbed by the contractors, big landlords and corrupt officials. There are not many hopeful signs today that the power-balance in most of the backward areas are changing in the right direction and quickly enough.

So far as the possibilities of sustaining an export-led growth, it is again important to remember that India is a large country. Even the most optimistic predictions about the expansion of India's export cannot visualise a scale of impact on the unemployment and the under-employment situation, given the demographic facts of the country. Therefore, the debate between the theories of export-led versus autarchic growth is academic in the Indian context. Obviously if the labour-intensive exportables (like garments, handloom, footwear and other leather goods, fish and fish products, light engineering goods, etc.) can find profitable foreign markets, they can contribute significantly towards solving the country's unemployment problem. But the trend in the world today seems to be towards protectionism — not merely in the poor underdeveloped countries but in the rich, industrialised countries as well. Nevertheless, the efforts in exports promotion for this group

of commodities should go on. Whatever the results, they can only be good.

Finally, in the long run, the Indian economy has no option but to create gainful employment for its vast labour force in agriculture and small industries. The employment potential of Indian agriculture is considerable. In 1971, the employment per 100 hectares of arable land in India was 93.2. The corresponding figure that year for Egypt was 181 and for Japan 219. Even in the wheat producing areas, where substantial productivity gains were realised in the recent years, the incentives worked in favour of mechanization. There are good reasons to believe that large-scale farming on the basis of wage labour may be capable of increasing outputs but cannot absorb the large bulk of the country's labour force. The only answer to the problems of unemployment and poverty may lie in the restructuring of agriculture on the basis of small-scale family farming. All the available statistical information seems to point towards the conclusion that small-scale family farms are more efficient. Hence the case for land reform.

Along with land reform, there has to be a support programme for making the small farmers viable and adaptive to technical progress. Currently the supply of credits, modern inputs are mostly cornered by big farmers, because they have the resources and connections. Agricultural extension and other service activities will have to be oriented towards the needs of the small farmers, if land reforms are to be successful.

In addition to land reform and the development of the required supportive activities, there has to be an emphasis on the development of small and medium industries. In the judgment of the present author, the emphasis on technology—the development of intermediate technology—is rather misplaced. The Indian experience of the quarter century clearly shows that only in those cases where a proper marketing and input-supplying network

was created, the village industries grew. The small producers are critically dependent on the market. Their capacity for holding inventories or accepting large risks is low. If a proper marketing organization, (to take prompt deliveries, supply inputs, introduce new designs and propagate possible changes) exists, then other things come in response to market demand. And it is in this area of creating an adequate infrastructure of service networks that small industries programmes fail.

Perhaps, the fault lies in the mind of the model-builder, who assumes that the products of small and village industries are necessarily for the consumption of the poor. In that case, a small producer could always find a local market, if he were efficient enough to be able to sell his product at a low price. But often the demand for handicrafts and other products of village industries are greater in the urban or the foreign markets. Similarly, it may be more efficient to meet some of the consumption needs of the rural poor by large-scale production in the organized sector. Therefore, the search for appropriate technology to create more or less self-sufficient village economies may be an unrewarding exercise. Perhaps, what is required is an economy-wide (including international trade) effort at identifying the fields in which labour-intensive small industries are capable of growing. The next task is to create an adequate infrastructure for the growth of these activities.

To sum up, it seems that the major problems before the Indian economy today are political and organizational. Whether India would be able to implement a programme of land reform and create the organizational framework for the development of small-holding agriculture and small-scale industries are open questions. International efforts at reducing quota restrictions and tariff barriers facing the labour-intensive exportables from India to the rich countries can make the development problems easier for the Indian economy. But the main task will remain for the society to solve for itself.

Balanced development

L K JHA

OUR priorities have been changing from plan to plan. We began with rapid industrialisation as our goal to make up for the time lost during British rule. As the import of plant and machinery made our foreign exchange reserves dwindle, compelling us to seek external assistance, we embarked upon a programme of setting up machine building industries to make the economy capable of 'self-generating growth'. But when we found that shortage of foodgrains made the country even more dependent on external assistance, the priority accorded to agriculture was upgraded. And even while we were congratulating ourselves on the success of the Green Revolution, growing regional disparities and the rising level of unemployment gave rise to fresh misgivings.

What the economy needs today is a massive effort to increase employment as well as special measures to promote development in areas which have for one reason or another not been involved in the development which has taken place in the last three decades.

Conditions today are particularly propitious for such an effort. The real resources needed for the purpose are available in an adequate if not abundant measure

We have 20 million tons of foodgrains in stock with the government. There is a large surplus of sugar in the country for which even the export markets have turned un-remunerative. There is no shortage of cloth and supplies can be augmented, creating more employment, if there is an increase in demand. If new jobs are created the money paid as wages to the workers will be spent mainly on food and clothing.

To the extent that any products for which the demand may increase are in short supply we have the foreign exchange with which to import them. What is more, the money paid out as wages will not result in monetary expansion. The stocks of foodgrains, sugar, etc., are being financed by massive increases in bank credit which will begin to contract as the new wage earners begin to consume it. A large volume of employment in other words can be generated without the need to mobilise additional resources. The savings of the community which are locked up in idle inventories and in the shape of foreign exchange reserves can be invested in ways which will be more productive.

Apart from the outlay on wages, we have today considerable real

resources for investment. We have a surplus of steel which we are exporting. Our capital goods industries also are exporting and yet have idle capacity. And to the extent that we have to import in capital goods foreign exchange will for a change not be a bottleneck.

In other words, we have today not only the need but the capacity to step up the level of investment. In the past we always had a chronic shortage of savings so that we had to make use of external capital — by way of governmental credits and private investment — to sustain our level of investment. In the year 1966-77, a reverse trend manifested itself. Our savings exceeded the level of capital formation as figures just published by the C.S.O. bring out. The contribution of foreign resources, as Reserve Bank's figures had earlier brought out, had become negative. These changes got reflected in the increase in our foreign exchange reserves in 1976-77 — a process which has been continuing throughout 1977-78. The foreign securities in dollar, sterling, etc., which the Reserve Bank holds are really credits we extend to countries who buy more from us than we buy from them.

We can therefore afford to raise the level of our investment. This is a pre-requisite for creating more jobs and for helping the least developed parts of the country. Only, as past experience shows, a mere increase in investment may not bring adequate benefits to the entire community. So we have to give special priority to job oriented development. The abundance of wage goods referred to above is particularly well suited for such a shift in emphasis. Indeed, unless we can quickly provide the under-fed with purchasing power, our efforts to produce more foodgrains will only result in locking up more bank finance and more expenditure on storage. In today's conditions, it would be as desirable from an economic as from a social point of view to concentrate on

creating jobs in the backward areas where hunger persists.

While there have been many definitions of backward areas, the essential cause and characteristic of their backwardness have been their remoteness — the absence of adequate links between them and the areas which have been developing. Although our growth rate on the average has been low — lower than many other developing countries — there have been parts of the country which have been having a good rate of growth by any standards. In a well-knit economy, prosperity percolates from higher income levels to lower ones, from areas enjoying a good rate of growth to areas of low growth or stagnation. The pace of such percolation is usually too slow to be relied on to reduce disparities substantially. But what we have to take note of is that in vast areas of the country people live in watertight isolation, where even the small benefits of percolation do not reach.

One such belt of backwardness spreads right across our northern boundary from Kashmir in the west to Mizoram in the east. The people have no railways to serve them and only very limited road links with inadequate transport facilities made costly through taxation. There are some pockets of prosperity in the hill-stations where the tourists flock. At some places the presence of our armed forces creates jobs. But the area as a whole lives in isolation. Even such natural wealth as it has does not enrich the life of the people. The fruits, the herbs and the spices that they grow either perish or are sold at a fraction of the price which they fetch in the metropolitan markets, while they pay a much higher price than others for whatever they get from outside. A massive programme of road building in the hilly areas of the country will create employment of the kind which will generate new demand for products for which today we are compelled to provide artificial demand through bank finance.

As new roads are constructed and new links between the stagnant and developing areas are established, a wholly new process of change and

progress will be started. The local produce which was being sold at throw-away prices or actually thrown away will become a source of income to the people encouraging them to produce more. As their incomes begin to rise, they will be able to satisfy more of their needs by obtaining them from the rest of the country at more favourable prices and, also, if appropriate steps are taken by producing some of them themselves. The problems they will then face will be the same as those in other areas where stagnation has persisted despite reasonably good communications.

Some policy measures have recently been announced to promote greater decentralisation of productive activities to help these areas. The main reliance is on preventing the entry or expansion of large scale industry in certain fields. The technique is not new. It has been used before. It has now been extended to a much wider range of products and the list is likely to expand. In order to assess the efficacy of this measure and to consider what additional steps are needed in order to achieve the desired results it would be worthwhile looking at past experience. The handloom sector has in the past had the benefit of certain types of textiles being reserved for it to the exclusion of the mill sector. In addition it has enjoyed a kind of tariff protection through the excises levied on mill made textiles.

Other products to whom similar treatment has been extended in the past are matches, shoes, sports goods and soap. In addition, what are known as small scale industries have also been receiving the benefit of lower excise duties with or without a reservation of the product for exclusive manufacture in the small scale sector. Finally, a number of other products have remained with the decentralised sector not so much because of any formal statutory reservation in their favour but because by their very nature they belong to the handicrafts sector such as carpets.

A study of the growth of these industries brings out a few salient facts. Their growth has depended not on local demand but on their

success in finding markets on a national or world wide scale. Handloom textiles are being marketed not only throughout India but in the U.S.A. and in Western Europe. Matches produced in the decentralised sector in South India are being sold in the northern States. Hand-made shoes have been sold in large quantities to the Soviet Union among other countries.

Since the size of the market has been a major factor in influencing the growth of these industries, it is worth examining how their marketing has been organised. In almost all of them, the producers themselves do not play a particularly significant role in marketing. In shoes and matches it is the multinationals whose products were dominating the market who are now playing a major role in marketing the products of the decentralised sector. In overseas marketing, some of the State-owned agencies have been the pioneers. Once the Handloom and Handicrafts Exports Corporation began pushing handloom fabrics into international markets, private agencies came into the picture in a big way in marketing both the textiles and the garments made of them.

But these success stories should not blind us to some weaknesses in the results achieved so far. Even the decentralised sector has tended to get centralised in terms of location. There are parts of the country in which these industries flourish. But they have not moved to areas where unemployment is most intense. This has not been due entirely or even mainly to such factors as the local availability of raw materials which cannot be disregarded. Two human factors have played an even more important role—the existence of traditional skills and the availability of entrepreneurs to organise the production.

Thus the concentration of the handloom sector in certain parts of the country has not been caused by considerations of proximity to sources of raw materials. Handloom textiles are woven out of cotton yarn produced by modern mills using cotton, which may be indigenous or imported, as well as

synthetic yarns, which again may be indigenous or imported. What has influenced their location has been the existence of hand-weaving as a craft and the quality of entrepreneurship provided by the so-called master weavers. It is they who get the yarn from the mills, allocate it to the weavers who get their wages and then arrange to get the fabric further processed and sold, sometimes through the textile mills themselves and sometimes through other agencies, private and public, which have been engaged in the marketing of handloom fabrics in India and overseas.

Similarly, the makers of shoes and matches are often executing orders placed on them by the multinationals who finance them and undertake the marketing of their products. The producers in most instances are in fact employees who undertake a job for an agreed remuneration and are not directly interested in the profits made at subsequent stages.

Apart from the industries which rely mainly on manual skills of the workers, there are small-scale industries which make the fullest possible use of mechanised techniques. They do so on a smaller scale, partly because they cannot muster finance for large scale production and partly because some of the facilities and concessions which they get from government, either in the shape of exemption from certain taxes or preferential treatment in the matter of credit or import licensing, depend on their not installing machinery exceeding a particular value. The availability of infrastructural facilities, proximity to the markets, access to materials and the ease or difficulty with which the requisite number of workers can be mustered—all these influence the choice of location which the entrepreneur makes.

His normal preference, based on these factors is to go as near a large industrial centre as possible where most of these needs are likely to be met. Another reason for this bias is that often small scale industries flourish as ancillaries to the

large scale sector and supply it with components which are incorporated in final consumer products. For example the automobile industry gets quite a number of its components from small scale industries.

From the preceding discussion of the functioning of the existing decentralised sector, some broad conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, it is not an operation thriving on the harnessing of local material to meet local needs. Its growth has depended on access to wider markets, both for obtaining its raw materials and for selling its final products. And this characteristic will be even more in evidence in respect of products hitherto produced by the large scale sector and now reserved for the smaller producer.

Secondly, the decentralised sector also tends to get centralised in certain locations. Special measures will be needed to achieve decentralisation in the geographical sense. It is against this background that we have to consider the kind of measures that need to be taken to create more jobs particularly in areas of low employment and low productivity.

Limitations on production by the large scale sector will no doubt create an opportunity for the decentralised sector to meet the demand, existing or potential, which the large scale sector will no longer be able to meet. But if for any reason decentralised production is not able to augment supplies quickly enough, there may well be an increase in the prices and profits of the larger producer. One way of avoiding this would be to rely more on a higher excise on the larger producer than on limiting his output. Such a device would enable the small producer to withstand the competition of the larger ones even if his costs are high and possibilities of windfall gains to the larger producer would be reduced.

However, what is more important is that positive steps should be taken to set up new production capacity on a decentralised basis instead of relying merely on the ban on the

large scale sector to achieve the objective. It has to be remembered that the real advantage which large scale industry enjoys over the smaller ones is not so much because it can deliver a cheaper product but because it can maintain a measure of uniformity in standards and can undertake advertising and marketing on a nation-wide scale. Suitable agencies need to be created to market the products of the decentralised sector and also to ensure that they maintain standards which will be acceptable to the consumer.

This means that the agency must also play a role in the organisation of production. Indeed, if the backward areas are to reap the benefits of this policy, reliance on local entrepreneurship, which may be totally absent, or on entrepreneur's moving in from other parts of the country, can only lead to disappointment. Directives to the banks to provide the necessary finance even on concessional terms may not do the trick. Not many may come forward to borrow, taking the risk of loss which is inherent in any enterprise. And some of those who do may well end up with a loss and without any capacity to repay the bank loans because they are unable to sell their product at a remunerative price. The fault may be their's in the sense that they did not correctly judge what the consumer wanted or that having done so they still failed to produce an acceptable product. Even if they are not to blame but are the victims of consumer prejudice, the situation would be no better.

To get the desired results, the production has to be organised in a way that the producer is told what to produce and, once he has done so, he is paid the agreed price and the risk of loss as well as the prospects of gain are taken over by the agency which places the order for the products. Private agencies could no doubt play such a role, but one must realise their limitations. They are not likely to go as far afield as may be considered desirable from the social angle. In areas which are reasonably close to major industrial cities, private initiative can be relied upon to a much greater extent than

in more distant ones. The way in which the small scale sector has grown in some parts of the country while industrial estates have remained vacant in others has a lesson which should not be forgotten.

The crux of the problem then is to find the prime mover to get things going. Restrictions on larger producers, access to bank credit and the availability of willing workers will not by themselves bring into being industries in the really backward areas unless the State sets up agencies to perform the functions of entrepreneurship. The talent for doing so is very different from the kind of qualities which make a good civil servant.

Some of the State Governments who have tried to get consumer goods produced in government owned factories have incurred losses time and again. Yet, there are many success stories too. The way in Bhadoi in Uttar Pradesh carpet weaving has been developed and expanded to become a major export industry is impressive. It involved training of workers and getting carpets of a quality and design which would appeal to the customers produced in ever increasing quantities.

The restrictions placed on the large scale sector should not lull us into the belief that new small producers will automatically spring up in the backward areas. When an activity which has some undesirable features is banned, an opportunity is created for a new activity which does not suffer from the same weakness. But the possibility also exists that the opportunity is not seized and ultimately shortages develop and a well meaning but ill-executed policy has to be abandoned. Negative controls have to be followed up by positive measures.

Finally, a few words of caution. The attempt must be to produce something which people will buy rather than to produce what people should buy. The attempt in the past to get standard cloth and controlled cloth produced by the mills, with special measures to keep their prices low, resulted on the

one hand in unsold stocks accumulating and on the other the cheap fabrics being put to wholly different uses from what they had been meant for. Given the disparities of income in the community, much more of the demand for the products of the decentralised sector would come from the middle and upper income groups than from the lowest income groups. This fact has to be faced realistically because employment can be sustained only by such supply as fulfils a demand backed by purchasing power. Even if the goods produced by the poor purvey to the needs of the rich, the very process will be helpful in generating new incomes among the workers who will then be in a position to make their demand for the things they need effective. The process can be further accelerated if through other measures income disparities get lowered. But products for which there is a need but not a demand cannot sustain employment.

Secondly, the assumption which is often made that the large scale sector is the adversary of the small scale sector or even that capital intensive industries are inimical to employment generation has to be examined much more critically than is usually done. To no small extent will decentralised production have to be based on various raw materials and other inputs which may have to come from the large scale sector. Even Khadi has — very appropriately — begun to make use of synthetic fibres in addition to natural fibres like cotton, silk and wool.

A wide variety of products in the small scale sector are based on metals like steel, copper, aluminium and zinc which have to come from large scale industry or have to be imported. Many of the products of the small scale sector are sold to large scale industry as components or to the employees of large scale industry as consumer products. A good rate of growth in the economy as a whole is essential for the demand for the products of the small scale producer to keep on rising.

A success story

V KURIEN

THE Anand Pattern of Dairy Cooperative has long been cited as a successful instrument of economic and social change. The dairy development programme known as 'Operation Flood' was launched in mid-1970 to replicate this pattern of Dairy Cooperative in seventeen major milksheds. Already, over one million small rural milk producers are involved.

Now 'Operation Flood II' is about to be launched. It is designed to enable ten million rural milk producers to increase their milk production — and to get the business of milk processing and marketing placed firmly in the producers' own hands, through the Anand Pattern of Dairy Cooperatives.

This approach to dairy development is strongly supported by the Government of India, as well as by multi-lateral and bi-lateral development agencies. This support is based on the belief that the Anand Pattern of Dairy Cooperative has three major advantages: (i) it provides productive

employment to landless labourers and small-holders in increased milk production; (ii) it does this by making the technical and organisational facilities involved subject to the producers' own decision making — and (iii) it thereby secures the participation of the poor rural majority in the broader processes of rural development.

To what extent and under what conditions is it correct that our dairy cooperatives achieve these objectives? There is as yet no definitive answer to that question. The social and economic impacts of the dairy cooperatives are, however, the object of continuing study and observation. The text summarises some of the evidence thus gathered and attempts briefly to draw interim conclusions.

In addition to the author's own working experience with the dairy cooperatives, the evidence cited is drawn from the preliminary results of a survey conducted by the National Dairy Development

Board, Anand, and from some case histories investigated by the Board's professional staff. Three milkshed districts have been considered: (i) Kaira District in Gujarat State, where the original Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperative operates, (ii) Banaskantha District, also in Gujarat, which is the site of one of the new Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperatives started under Operation Flood — and (iii) 'X District,' which is an example of a District in another (un-named) State, where one of the new Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperatives has been started under Operation Flood.

The full title of the original Anand Cooperative is 'Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union, Ltd., Anand'. It is a Union of some 830 village milk producers' co-ops, with its main dairy plant and administrative offices at Anand, in Kaira District, Gujarat.

In 1943, milk was collected by a private party in Kaira District for shipment to the then 'Bombay Milk Scheme.' Dis-satisfied with the exploitative price paid for their milk by the monopolistic private buyer, the farmers struck and refused to sell their milk. On the advice of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, they decided that they should own and operate their milk business cooperatively.

At the Sardar's instance, his lieutenants moved around the District, persuading and helping the milk producers to form village milk cooperatives. There was opposition from the imperial bureaucracy and from private milk traders. Progress was slow, but in 1946 the first five village co-ops formed their Union. After Independence, the Union was helped by the then Greater Bombay State Government to acquire pasteurising facilities, so that it could ship milk overnight to the new Greater Bombay Milk Scheme.

Sometimes, however, the GBMS refused the Union's milk, preferring to use foreign subsidised milk powder, because it was cheaper. This meant that the co-ops had to refuse their producer members' milk, which greatly weakened

the co-ops. Thus, by 1955, there were only 64 village co-ops in the Union.

This was why the Union decided that it had to acquire processing facilities to make skim milk powder, baby food, butter, etc. Then it could be sure of being able to accept all the milk which members wanted to sell, even in the winter flush-season. Thus, in the late-1950s, the Union built up its processing facilities and launched its line of dairy products under its brand-name 'Amul.'

Meanwhile, the Union also broadened its services to members. Originally, the village co-ops simply accepted milk for sale each morning and evening, fat-tested it and paid for it (on the basis of quality) the next morning or evening. On behalf of all member-village co-ops, the Union arranged for hired trucks to pick up the milk each morning and evening according to a fixed schedule, and to bring it to the Union's dairy plant at Anand for processing and subsequent marketing.

Then the Union hired veterinary doctors, who visited every village co-op once weekly and who provided an on-call emergency service for sick milch animals. It also set up an Artificial Insemination system, trained village men to be Lay Inseminators and Animal First-aid Workers. It acquired a feed compounding plant and started to market balanced cattle-feed through the village co-ops and all these milk production enhancement activities were paid for out of the margins which the Union earned on members' milk.

Now the Anand Union has 831 village milk co-ops with 255,000 members. The Union's milk products have a market value of some Rs 45 crores — and the Union's system for helping all member-milk producers to increase their milk production has become quite well known.

The Decision to Replicate

As milk producers in other nearby Districts learned about the Anand

Dairy Cooperative, they also adopted the Anand Pattern. The original Union at Anand established its own Projects Division, which helped sister Unions to set up their own dairy plants. Thus, by the early 1960s, there were five Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperatives.

The then Prime Minister, Shri Lalbahadur Shastri, visited Anand in 1964. At his own insistence, he stayed the night in a village near Anand. After talking with the milk producers and seeing the work of the Co-op, he suggested that there be a national body to replicate the Anand Pattern of Dairy Cooperative in all the country's major milksheds — and that is how, in 1965, the National Dairy Development Board came to be formed.

Until 1970, however, the NDDB could not replicate the Anand Pattern. Milk traders objected. Local bureaucracies said there was no money etc. Out of all its difficulties, the NDDB then designed the programme known as Operation Flood. The Government of India set up the Indian Dairy Corporation, to receive donated dairy commodities and to generate funds by having these commodities marketed as liquid milk. Some Rs. 100 crores were to be generated this way — with the major objective of replicating the Anand Pattern of Dairy Co-operative in 17 milksheds.

The NDDB had already developed some staff for designing and building dairy plants (based on the original Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperative's Projects Division). With the onset of Operation Flood, the NDDB recruited more of the original Co-ops staff this time, in particular, officers skilled in farmers' organisation, provision of veterinary services etc. These officers then recruited and trained the NDDB's 'Spearhead Teams' groups of veterinary doctors and agronomists, trained in cooperative organisation, who worked in new milksheds with locally recruited staff, to help village milk producers organise their own co-ops.

The NDDB also organised its 'Farmers Induction Programme,' a scheme for bringing farmers from

new milksheds to Anand, so that they could see the working of the original Anand Cooperative for themselves—then, on returning to their villages, these milk producers would testify to their neighbours as to the effectiveness of the Anand Pattern

The rest of this text considers the effectiveness of these instruments for replicating the Anand Pattern of Dairy Cooperative.

- Three Case Histories

Kaira District has 574,200 hectares of cultivable land, 255,000 (53%) of its estimated 389,000 rural families are members of the Union's 831 village milk producers' co-ops (which, in effect, cover all the District's villages, small hamlets are served by nearby village co-ops.)

Surveys indicate that 38% of households are landless—and out of these nearly one-third (11%) have milch animals, 80-100% of milk producers sell milk to their co-op and use the co-operatives' services for increasing their milk production. Twenty-three mobile clinics and 53 veterinary doctors provide veterinary care in all member-villages, as well as emergency visits.

Vasna in Kaira District is an example of a village with a well developed milk co-op. Out of 600 households, 559 are members. The co-ops first start-up, in 1954, aborted because its leadership made it a 'family affair', but in 1955 the village leaders met with the Anand Union's staff and the co-op was re-started. Today, most villagers ascribe the co-ops success to 'committed staff' and 'factionless leadership,' these responses—as well as levels of participation in the co-ops managing committee, etc.—are common to all groups: landless, sub-marginal farmers, etc

The co-op has constructed its milk collection centre, warehouse for cattle-feed and Artificial Insemination Centre for Rs 101,000. It has contributed a total of Rs. 112,000 to construction of the village's link-road (with labour provided by the village, organised by the co-op), drinking water supply, library,

primary school and women's education programme.

Ishwarbhai Motibhai Patel has been the Co-op's Secretary for 10 years. From 1.6 hectares of land, he earns some Rs. 8,000. His wife and daughters tend his 3 buffaloes, one cross-bred cow and 3 cross-bred calves. The family's profit on milk is obtained mainly in the form of milk consumed (2 litres daily) and from rearing cross-bred heifers (which usually fetch some Rs 2,500 each)

Indranaz is one of Kaira District's few villages with a milk co-op which can be described as 'less developed'. Until recently, the village's milk producers sold their milk to the co-op in a larger village nearby, but this meant that they could not so readily avail of the Anand Union's veterinary services, etc. Prior to the start of their own co-op (where about 80% of the milk producers sell their milk), some 20 producers sold their milk to a nearby co-op, the rest prepared ghee and exchanged it at the village shop for grains, etc

Observing the benefit to the community of the nearby co-op—its milk co-operative building, its all weather approach road, its TV set supplied by the Union and, above all, the availability of milk production inputs—they approached the Anand Union expressing their desire to start their own co-op. Once it started, they stopped selling ghee (which they can purchase from the milk co-op) and they plan to construct their approach road this year, so that the milk truck can come right into the village.

J A Rana is a farmer of this village who worked hard for the establishment of the village co-op. His family had a lot of trouble, looking after their two buffaloes, before the co-op started, whenever his buffalo was sick, he had to call a government doctor from Tarapur, 10km away—and pay Rs. 30/- a visit. Yet the doctor was always a stranger to them. Now, his wife and daughter feel free to discuss any problems of their buffaloes with the veterinary doctor of the Union, who is available for an emergency-call at half the cost of the government

doctor, who is available whenever they want—and who any way visits Indranaz regularly once every week.

Banaskantha District is one of those in which Operation Flood has helped in establishing an Anand Pattern Dairy Cooperative. Although its agricultural resources are generally poorer than those of Kaira District, it is nonetheless quite suited to mixed farming. Its estimated 175,000 families farm nearly 900,000 hectares of land and keep almost 700,000 milch animals.

In contrast to Kaira, some 28% of households in Banaskantha are landless, of which nearly one-quarter (6%) have milch animals. At the start of Operation Flood, in mid 1970, 75 village milk co-ops had already been started in the district and their Union was shipping milk to a sister Union's dairy for processing and marketing.

Operation Flood funds were used to finance the Union's own dairy plant, which was commissioned in 1971 and also in 1974, to help the Union finance the provision of veterinary care, AI Service, etc. The Union now employs 15 veterinary doctors. The Union's milk co-ops are already established in 360 of the District's 1,369 villages.

Dhanda is one of Banaskantha's villages with a milk producers' co-op which can be classified as 'advanced'. The village's 500 families are mainly Patels, Muslims and Harijans. The co-op was started in 1970, thanks largely to the interest taken by one S H. Patel, a farmer with four years of education and two brothers, Fatehkhan and Vajidkhan, who had had about seven years of education.

Despite the village's general suspicion of the co-op and its fat-testing procedures *plus* the local milk merchant's opposition, fifteen supporters of the co-op were recruited—and, on the co-op's first day, 113 litres of milk were collected from some 40 producers. Now it has 211 members and collects 1,000-1,200 litres of milk daily.

In this area, when a Patel daughter marries, she stays at home for some years, her father usually gives

her one buffalo — and, subsequently, half the money earned from the buffalo's milk. Thus, when she moves to her husband's village, she brings a buffalo with her. One-third of Dhanda's buffaloes are believed to be daughters-in-law buffaloes.

S R. Ghasura, a young Muslim with education up to the Matric, is the co-ops Ley Inseminator. An ex-Village Level Worker, he is well accepted by all communities in the village and he takes an active interest in the health of everybody's buffaloes.

Kalubhai Rambhai (a landless Harijan) has a family of 9 and keeps 3 buffaloes, two are at present in milk and he nets Rs 68 daily from them after buying some feedstuffs. Although he sells milk to the co-op, he is not a member.

Smt. Baibaben is a landless person from another District. She fled her home in 1966 because her drunken husband ill-treated her. She had to work as a labourer for three years, but then she was able to buy a buffalo. Now she has two. She is educating her son and hopes he will complete his education. She sold milk to the co-op as soon as it started — and became a member in 1973, when females were first accepted as members.

Vasi has one of Banaskantha's 'less developed' village co-ops. Its start-up owed much to the initiative of Amar Singh, its Secretary. A multi-caste village with 150 households, Vasi has recently gone through a Panchayat election, in which the winning group defeated the co-op Chairman, became hostile to the co-op — and now sells milk to the local milk merchant. Membership has declined from 112 to 55 households.

Lababhai Bhikabhai, a tribal, is a co-op member. He has a family of 11, farms 1.4 hectares and keeps two buffaloes plus one cow; all are now dry and he declares himself 'miserable'. Nevertheless he expects to educate his son for at least 8 years ... Non-members cite the rigidity of milk-collection timings and the 'liberality' of the milk merchant as reasons for not joining the co-op,

as well as the fact that Vasi still has no regular veterinary service.

X District is another district in which an Anand Pattern Dairy Co-operative has been started with the help of Operation Flood. (To avoid embarrassment, names of places and people in this section are disguised.) X District has nearly 800 villages and is believed to be at least as suited to milk production as, say, Kaira District. Early in the 1970s, the State Government formed a wholly State-owned Dairy Development Corporation, to be the agency responsible for implementing Operation Flood in the State. Recently, this Corporation was converted into the State's Dairy Development Co-operative Federation and it owns all the State's dairy plants.

In 1972, at the request of the State, NDDB sent a Spearhead Team to work in X District. The then Dairy Development Corporation formed a 'Procurement & Inputs Wing' to work with NDDB's Spearhead Team. Altogether, 22 village co-ops were thus started in X District in 1972, but the NDDB then withdrew its Team because of administrative problems.

In 1973-74, another NDDB Spearhead Team went to X District, but it was withdrawn shortly afterwards. In 1977, staff from the then Dairy Development Corporation's 'Procurement & Inputs Wing' were assigned to Anand for training in co-operative organisation, etc. This Team then returned to X District, where it works under the guidance of the NDDB's Spearhead Team Leader.

However, although the Corporation has now become a Dairy Co-operative Federation, its P & I Wing staff are said to consider themselves as government employees and are remote from the producers. While the Federation owns and operates the dairy plants, as well as fielding its P & I Wing, the X District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union (the Anand Pattern Dairy Co-op established under Operation Flood) is responsible for organisation of procurement and transport of milk from co-ops to the dairy plant, supply of cattle-feed, etc.

Altogether, several agencies are involved in X District's dairying: the X District Anand Pattern Union; the State Dairy Cooperative Federation; the District Cooperative Registrar; another State Federation, which owns the local cattle-feed compounding plant, the X District Small Farmers' Development Association — and the NDDB's small Spearhead Team. In these organisations, two important functionaries were missing for some time (i) the Dairy Co-op Union has no Chairman (although it has a Board of 18 Directors, in which the State nominees have veto-rights) — and (ii) although the Union had a staff of 23, for some time it had no Chief Executive Officer, instead, the General Manager of the Federation's dairy plant, a deputised State Government officer, had been acting as the Union's Chief Executive Officer. Only recently has the Union appointed a CEO.

Of the 200-odd village co-ops registered, only about half are functioning and most of these procure too little milk to be viable. A common cause of close-down is that members (some of whom are said not to have been milk producers) have joined the co-op (and its Managing Committee) on receiving 'cattle loans' through the Co-operative Department, on which they have defaulted.

Sirila is a large village in X District with a milk producers' co-op which can be classified as 'advanced'. One of the first 22 village co-ops to be started in the District in 1972, two-thirds of milk-producer families in the village belong to it. The Secretary of the co-op, since its start-up, has been a retired non-commissioned officer of the Indian Army, educated up to the Matric and owner of one buffalo. Like the Secretary, most co-op members view the co-op as an economic institution: it pays a much better price for milk than the private traders — and it is honestly run. Few members have heard of the 'input programme' (veterinary service, etc.) which seems not to have touched the village.

Thanasa is a village in X District where a milk producers' co-op has just been started. Within 10 days

of start-up, 15% of families had joined the co-op and private milk traders had left the village. Most members said they had joined the co-op 'because they could be sure of their money'. It has so far no regular co-op veterinary service.

Another village in X District has seen its co-op fail and, later, revive. It was started by NDDB's Spearhead Team in 1972, who identified Smt. X, a landless milk-trader, as a keen and effective organiser. At first, only 5% of the village's households joined the co-op. Initially acting as an appointed Chairman, Smt X nevertheless requested that men be appointed to the Managing Committee, in case the village thought of the co-op as 'an all-female affair'.

After two years, some 15% of the village's households had become members. The co-op was viable. In a Managing Committee election, Smt X and the female Vice Chairman were returned unopposed. Then, for family reasons, she had to leave the village — and, within a year, she heard that the co-op had failed. Ultimately, she returned and re-started the co-op. She blamed its failure on corrupt practices by office bearers and employees, in collusion with departmental officers — especially their succumbing to temptations created by the official 'cattle loan' programme (which had left the co-op liable for Rs 5,000 in defaulted loans). She deplores the lack of cooperative veterinary services.

Out of income from milk, Smt X has educated a son (now in the army) and 3 daughters (all have passed a teachers' training course, one is Secretary to the milk producers' co-op in another State) — and now she is intent on educating one of her sons-in-law, while also enabling her youngest daughter to graduate from college.

The Anand Pattern Dairy Co-ops in Kaira, Banaskantha and X District appear to represent a progression, not only in time, but in effectiveness. Does the apparently limited effectiveness

of the most recently-established co-op in X District, indicate that the Anand Pattern cannot be replicated? — and that, the further we get away from the original Anand Pattern Dairy Co-op, in space and time, then the closer to impossible the task of replication must become? Surely not: the X District Dairy Co-op is functioning (albeit erratically) — and so are new Anand Pattern Dairy Co-ops in some 25 other Districts.

As many have remarked: no doubt the start-up of the original Dairy Co-op at Anand, gained much of its impetus from the quality of leadership provided by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his followers — and from the emotive drive which came from the co-ops formation being, in a sense, part of the Independence movement.

The latter factor cannot exactly be replicated 30 years after Independence — but its counterpart is present, when a team of devoted professionals moves into a new milkshed, to help the producers organise their co-ops. They are, after all, helping the producers to effectuate their independence. Smt Baibaben of Dhanda, and Lalabhai Bhikabhai of Vasi, in Banaskantha, are educating their sons: something that could not have happened, without the co-op.

The young professionals involved are motivated by being part of this contemporary 'independence movement' — and this appears to enable them to bring comparable leadership to the surface in the village. Behind every little village co-op, one finds that just a few people, at the start, commit themselves to making the co-op a success. They are not necessarily 'large farmers' — nor even, necessarily, educated people, although that appears to help note the case of Dhanda, where SH Patel and the two brothers, Fatehkhani and Vajidkhan, really built up the co-op.

At the start, the 'spirit of liberation' thus engendered is doubtless invaluable, when the co-op has to battle with the entrenched vested interests of the traders and the bureaucrats. Once the co-op is

well established, however, an environment of stability and professionalism is established. Note the case of Vasna in Kaira District, where the members now take the concept of a 'factionless leadership' as part of their way of life — and, indeed, having organised their milk business, are turning to the more extensive task of developing their village's community services.

This situation contrasts with that of Sirila, in X District — but, even there, most of the milk producers already take it for granted that 'their money is safe' with the co-op. As there is no veterinary service or Artificial Insemination, they have taken the co-op as far as they can as an economic institution; only the professionals have let them down.

An Instrument of Technical, Economic and Social Development

When the co-op starts, the milk producers have to market their milk to a *schedule* (the truck schedule) — and they to line up, regardless of class or creed, in order to do this. For many, these objective disciplines are the first personal experience of collective action toward a goal shared by the community at large.

The discipline involved is still fairly widely resented in X District: it is accepted, but rather exaggerated (almost ritualised) in Banaskantha — and it is taken for granted in Kaira. That, surely, is the progression which, the case studies indicate, can be expected, as the producers become accustomed to having the instruments of development in their own hands.

Technical, economic and social change is taking place. Landless people and small-holders are benefiting. But 'Spearhead Teams' have to be very dedicated — and have to work as a *team* — and 'Farmers Induction Programmes' have to be implemented with great skill — if this instrument of development is to be successful. The farmers are ready and able to do their part of the job — but can the same be said of the politicians, the bureaucrats and the technically qualified?

Books

PLANNING PROCESS IN A DISTRICT by Kamal Nayan Kabra. Published by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1977.

THERE has been a growing conviction that one of the major failures of planning so far has been its inability to grapple with realities of the situation as it obtains at the grassroots, because planning has been from the top down, instead of in the reverse direction. Hence the targets, allocations and investments were far removed from what was feasible and required in the actual conditions obtaining in the areas for which the plans were made. This is in spite of the fact that lower level and multi-level planning in the shape of district planning has been paid lip service to for some time now. Obviously, then, there have been some lacunae in the kind of district planning practised till now was evidenced by its failure to deliver the goods. What form has this planning taken? What have been the defects? What are the remedies? Academicians and official agencies of late have been taking a closer look at grassroots planning to see how it can be revitalised. The IIPA in particular has sponsored a number of studies on this subject and the one under review is one such.

Although the Planning Commission has moved away now in the formulation of the Sixth Plan from district planning to block level planning and area development as the key concepts in decentralised planning, a study of the kind made by Kabra is still valuable in that it is a pointer in the right direction. If there are deficiencies and problems in planning at the district level, these problems and deficiencies are sure to exist, probably even in an enhanced form, at the block level and a diagnosis of the ills is the first step towards seeking a cure.

Kabra's work is a pilot study to bring out and analyse various aspects of the planning process in a district of one sample State, 'in terms of its role, objectives, agencies, decision-making processes, tasks and their implications'. He begins by making out a case for district planning in India, stating its objectives, its relationship with other levels of planning in a multi-level planning frame and the two concepts of district planning which have been in vogue so far, namely, that in existence before the Fourth Plan and that operationalised by the Fourth Plan. The district is the ideal level for planning at the grassroots, according to Kabra, because it allows for an harmonisation of informational, decision-making and operational-organizational structure. Present thinking, however, considers even the district too

large a unit at which the planning process should originate and the ideal basic unit is considered to be the block. This, however, does not nullify Kabra's case for decentralised planning but lends greater force to an argument for further decentralisation.

Kabra's arguments for decentralising planning at the district level are the following

1. Due to better and more precise knowledge about the physical, geographical, techno-economic, socio-political, and organizational-administrative conditions, the co-relation between the achievements of financial and physical targets improves, and there is likely to be better project planning and implementation in fields like agriculture, animal husbandry, etc
2. It will lead to better locational decisions and synchronisation of projects in related fields can reduce the gestation period and increase the turnover of resources
3. It allows for more realistic norms to be set for allocating physical and financial resources
4. It supposedly brings about popular participation in the Plan and makes poor targeting easier. But Kabra here, very rightly, points out that this can be so only if the potential beneficiaries, viz., the rural poor, are organized in a planned manner and are enabled through the organization to bring the planning processes to bear on their needs and aspirations.

But, while national planning recognized the value of district planning, the role assigned to it till the Fourth Plan was limited and a narrow one, consisting of listing and adding together village or block-wise demands without any considerations either of priority or of the constraint of resources, or an examination of adequacy and locational suitability of various projects. The final Plan emerged from the top and came to the district as a disaggregation and decomposition of national sectoral targets into district level tasks and targets and had little correlation with the original catalogue of demands, projects, and schemes strung together as a district plan.

Dissatisfaction with the process resulted in a different approach to district planning in the formulation of the Fourth Plan, and Kabra makes a distinction between the two approaches, the Fourth Plan concept being a wider concept in which an integrated strategy of development, 'capable of showing up an

hierarchy of priorities based on the inter-relations among various developmental factors is evolved and applied for designing and implementing concrete balanced programmes and projects.'

In Chapter III, Kabra describes how the district plans are to be formulated according to the described model, highlights and analyses the objectives, agencies, steps in the planning process and points out the lacunae in the prescribed model. The model and its various steps do not specify if, how, and at what stage the planners get a prior knowledge and understanding of the overall national and State long-term perspectives, objectives, and strategy, which should form the backdrop for their district plans. Similarly, various sub-plans and special target group schemes are left unrelated to the district plan.

Also, questions of the content of development, choice of a strategy of development, and the social complexion of who the district planners are, cannot be separated because district level planning is conceived as a device which welds plan formulation and plan implementation together in the same agency. The question, 'who are the district planners' assumes great importance because the answer will willy nilly affect the effectiveness of district planning.

Before going on to consider how far the operative model conforms to, or differs from the prescribed model, Kabra sets out a number of hypotheses about substantive issues of district planning as also the organizational aspects, which are tested in the course of empirical investigation. One feels this chapter would have been more fruitfully taken at the beginning for it breaks the narrative from the prescribed model to the operative model and detracts from the cohesiveness of the book's structure. Be that as it may, Kabra finds many of his hypotheses proved and concludes that, 'while the similarities between the prescribed model and the operative model are few, formal and peripheral, the dissimilarities are significant, and important,' and in fact it is the earlier, cruder pre-Fourth Plan model which is still prevalent.

Though the Fourth Plan concept enjoins its planners to evolve an appropriate regional or sub-regional strategy of development, the empirical findings show that hardly any exercise of this kind is attempted. Nor do the pre-conditions for actually carrying out the exercise exist. Neither is a perspective regional profile of development and inter-regional inter-relation generated and communicated, nor is a revamped lower level machinery conceptualised. Similarly, enlargement and enriching of the data base and data collection; processing skills, realignment of existing district borders to broadly conform to obvious regionalisation needs, necessary structural and institutional changes in the rural society in general and in agrarian relations in particular, in order to give content to democracy are also conspicuous by their absence.

Here are some of the important defects in the oper-

ative model mentioned by Kabra which will have to be rectified if district planning is to be meaningful.

1. An information failure consisting of little awareness of national and State-level planning policy and perspective at the district and block level, except on the part of one or two top functionaries.
2. The guidelines leave hardly any initiative to the district and block level officials. Moreover, plans prepared at the lower level are modified at higher levels without reference to the former. Concentration of allocative functions at higher levels and lack of knowledge about financing and real resources render the lower level decision-making about programmes and projects non-operational.
3. Population participation is confined to interaction with progressive and well-to-do farmers only, and poor targeting is neglected.
4. Consistency between physical and financial targets is defaulted because no assumption and, therefore, no allowances are made about changes in price level.

All in all, Kabra feels that district planning as practised at present is more a formality than a substantial fact. He concludes by saying that many policy implications follow from the analysis but does not spell them out specifically. They are to be implied from the pre-conditions for effective lower-level planning that he mentions along the way.

The book is well written and closely argued and though the analysis flows from observations of one district in a particular State and though conditions obtaining in different States, both organizationally and operationally, are not exactly similar, one feels his conclusions have general validity. Kabra has well fulfilled the task of pin-pointing the deficiencies in the present set-up and as such the book is a useful and topical pointer to the pitfalls block planning should avoid. One only wishes he had gone a little further and suggested a substitute organizational and operational model. The diagnosis is accurate, but the cure has been left for someone else to prescribe and supervise.

Pushpa Sundar

POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT by C T Kurien.

Published for the Christian Institute for the Study of Religions and Society by C.L.S., Madras, 1974.

PROFESSOR C.T. Kurien has come out with yet another book, which certainly provides some food for thought. This book is a collection of 14 articles published by the author at various times between 1970 and 1973 at the invitation of a variety of journals and agencies, often with their own specifications about the content and length. The book also has an introduction in which the author has tried to

define the common theme which he claims is implicit in all these articles. The papers in this book have been attempts to give expression to a new perspective on poverty and development, which he says are not yet substantively defined. Thus according to the author 'they therefore represent a groping but hopefully not in total darkness'.

There are altogether 16 chapters in the book including the introductory one and a post script. Kurien's main point is that the problems of poverty cannot be understood unless one extricates oneself from what is commonly referred to as 'development economics', because according to the author 'development economics' did not result from an actual intercourse of academic economics and practical problems. But to this reviewer it appears to be an unfair criticism because one has only to look through the learned journals and vast amount of reports and books produced on various aspects of problems of developing economies to see how many of the theories of 'development economics' have their roots in the practical problems.

The author's other complaint is that development economics does not pay sufficient attention to the problems of the ownership of resources, and the resulting problem of power, and according to him it is this which should be the centre of discussion of poverty and development. He complains that the traditional neo-classical theory evades this problem by assuming that there are large numbers of decision-makers and as such no one person can influence the market. He further argues that the definition of development used commonly in the literature is too narrow for any practical purposes. He prefers to define development as a process whereby one set of institutions is replaced by another. He says the problem of poverty and development cannot be understood fully unless one takes into account the pattern of distribution of resources in an economy, because it is this which ultimately decides what type of products will be produced, how they will be produced and who will consume.

In an economy which has high unequal distribution of income, large amounts of investment will be allotted to the production of goods which cater to the needs of the privileged few who have high economic power. To solve this problem of poverty, the strategy cannot be in terms of planning models, because they are merely theoretical tools, and that too, often irrelevant to the basic problem, i.e., the problem of poverty and its eradication. He says the only way that poverty can be abolished is by bringing about radical changes in the institutional structure of society, in particular, the ownership of economic resources. This needs awakening of the social consciousness of the masses. But the author does not provide any strategy for bringing about any such transformation.

Even though some of his complaints about the present state of the science of development economics are valid, the author himself does not provide

any alternatives, and some of his objections are merely polemic and contradictory. They are also frequent repetitions of the argument throughout the book. Finally, all the articles are by no means of uniformly high standard. Nevertheless, some of them certainly make interesting points for planners and students to bear in mind.

R.K. Sampath

INDUSTRIALISATION AND MANAGEMENT:

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES by Samuel

Paul. Somaiya Publications, 1977.

THE title of the book 'Industrialisation and Management. Problems and Perspectives', somehow suggests an anatomy of the corporate sector, adequately dissected to understand its structure and functions, both of its public and private sector components, with a scenario of the shape of things to come in the context of the Indian environment. Perhaps, one might have expected some comparisons with somewhat similar and recent experiments in the Soviet Union and China on the one hand and Japan on the other, in order to both differentiate and understand better the logic of our own industrialisation programme.

The author, however, is quick to point out in his introduction that he has no grand design in mind and that the book has grown from a collection of essays published by him between the years 1970 and 1975, in various periodicals and newspapers. While individually the essays touch upon specific problems dealing with industrialisation or management, be it industrial policy and planning or the economic environment or exports or cost benefit analysis, they lack cohesion and a unity of purpose. Besides, there are several gaps which make the book disjointed. Thus, there is no essay to provide a historical perspective of industrialisation in India and absolutely nothing is said on the technology front, be it with regard to import of technology, the role of multinationals in LDCs or the infrastructural capability to absorb and develop technology on a regenerative basis. The last three decades have seen an ever higher rate of mechanisation and automation in the industrially advanced countries, which have drastically altered both costs and scale factors of entry. These in turn have made the whole question of technological options of the LDCs both more complex and difficult to reconcile with the criterion of 'self-reliance'. Prof Paul, however, fails to dwell on these issues let alone illuminate them.

Despite these shortcomings, there are individual chapters like the one dealing with 'Industrial Performance and Government controls', which provide useful data on growth rates in various industrial sectors, and go on to establish a correlation between the 'Effective Rate of Protection (ERP)' and capacity utilisation. The conclusion being that government policy predicated the 'low volume, high profit margin' approach, which helps neither the

consumer nor is conducive to self-regenerative growth. The thesis propounded by the author in the chapter 'joint sector, guidelines for policy' is not quite so acceptable, since it postulates that such an approach directs investment into socially desirable channels. Instead of providing guidelines one could have been happier to see a quantitative analysis of the performance of the Joint Sector as it operates under the umbrella of the various States Industrial Development Corporations. Somehow, one tends to have a sneaking suspicion that the present 'sickness' of industry which is assuming endemic proportions might be aided by such an approach. The section on the economic environment does not deal adequately with the phenomenon of 'stagflation'. Further, the relationship between agricultural productivity and industrial growth is not adequately dealt with.

The Chapter on 'Competitiveness of Exports: A Microlevel Approach' is useful, but both the theoretical framework and the empirical data has to be further improved and developed if it is to provide a basis for strategic planning in the future. The section on cost benefit analysis is disappointing because it fails to highlight the central issues, nor does it educate us on questions of 'value' in our society. Prof Paul, unfortunately, is most disappointing when he deals with the management of 'public enterprises' or 'in government', because his delineation of the problem is far too qualitative for a meaningful diagnosis to emerge.

In all, the book is a disappointing one, but then Prof Paul exists in an environment which is basically hostile to an industrial culture, where neither government policy nor social attitudes are conducive to material progress and where neither the 'technology push' or 'demand pull' effect operates; it is essentially a momentum generated from without which somehow percolates into our system and induces change however lackadaisical or inefficiently managed, and pushes us into the technological era almost in spite of our basic emotional attitudes and urges.

Gautam Soni

TOWARDS AN INDUSTRIAL POLICY 2000 AD

by P.D. Malgavkar and V.A. Pai Panandiker
Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, 1977.

FORECASTING as an approach or technique was first employed by the Rand Corporation where it was pioneered by people like Herman Kahn, the founder of the Hudson Institute. In the initial stages, it was used for making technological forecasts in the area of defence analysis and later extended to analyse future scenarios for society. A landmark, in the latter type of study, was the 'Limits to Growth' report sponsored by the Club of Rome at MIT under Meadows. The prediction by this report, of catastrophic doom for mankind and the world, stimulated a great deal of debate, which resulted not only in a second study by the Club of Rome, namely, 'Man-

kind at its Turning Point', but numerous others of a similar genre. The approach or method, whether it be called forecasting or futurology, has come to stay.

The work under review, however, differs from the Club of Rome report in one important aspect, namely, it does not use computer modelling for making its predictions or delineating future scenarios. Trend extrapolation, using different growth assumptions ($6 \pm 2\%$), in key resource areas whose limits are derived from other more microscopic studies, forms the basis for arriving at conclusions about the structure of economic development in the year 2000 in India. Needless to say, this is not the first study of its kind. Similar studies have been done by the Tata Economic Consultancy Services (TECS), 'Indian Economy in 2000 AD' (1974) and the Operations Research Group (ORG), Baroda, 'A Long Range Perspective for India — Consumption Pattern and Life Style 2000 AD' (1975).

However, this work has the obvious merit not only of using their conclusions, but also those of the later and excellently conceived series titled *the Second India Series*, in its sections dealing with population, food, energy and water. The macroscopic picture which, therefore, emerges is clearly a better estimate than that arrived at in the past. In the context of minimum needs (as defined in the 4th plan draft), it goes on to examine Chenery's data on economic structure with the level of development and clearly shows that even if this objective is to be achieved as a social goal, even by the year 2000, it would be necessary to achieve an overall economic growth rate in excess of 6% per annum over the next 20 years.

It is, therefore, evident that the planning process in India, if it is to be at all effective, needs much greater political will if the country is to reach a level of economic development which was achieved by Japan in the late 50s, even by the year 2000. The dictates of economic logic point out that there can be no substitute for industrial growth whether it be to increase GNP, food production, employment or to control the growth of population or even the quality of life under present compulsions. It can also be seen that a 6% rate of growth would only give us a per capita income of \$ 287 while an 8% growth rate would increase it to a level of \$ 475 by the year 2000 (at 1971 prices and assuming a population of 950 million in 2000 AD).

While in terms of raw material resources the next 25 years do not appear to pose a problem, in the case of other resource areas like energy, water and food, it is absolutely essential to set up long range Task Forces to examine these problems in greater depth, together with alternatives and strategies, in an integrated manner. The problem of urban development in view of the shifting economic structure towards industrialisation, makes it imperative that an urban planning board at the national level, be constituted urgently. This is absolutely essential if

we wish to avoid urban chaos in the future or plan new growth centres in an optimally structured manner. This volume is a useful reference handbook and provides a macroscopic perspective to the problem of economic development which will be found useful by both planners and policy makers alike.

Seminarist

PERSPECTIVES IN INDIAN BANKING by Gopal Karkal
Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1977.

THE Indian banking system has come a long way from the days of indigenous bankers to the present day concept of a modern commercial banking system. Since the introduction of social control over banks in June, 1967, commercial banking has been given a new direction and this industry is now emerging as an instrument of both economic growth and distributive justice. The traditional view of a banker as only a repository of savings of the people has given place to the modern banking concept playing a positive role in the economic and monetary policies of the country.

However, in spite of the changed contexts having placed an enormous strain on the organisational and management resources of the bank, comparatively very little attention has been received by this industry from economists and management experts towards filling up the knowledge gap, beyond uttering some theoretical pronouncements. In fact, there are few books on the banking industry which deal with banking activities, its effects and objectives, in a comprehensive manner against the proper background of the existing situation and the developmental history of the Indian banking industry.

In this respect, Dr. Karkal's treatise (or a tract as the author prefer to call it) is one of the first of its kind. The book not only presents a broad perspective in Indian banking but also methodically and systematically deals with the various concepts and ideas related to a modern banking system.

The author traces the history of growth of banking in the country but, more specifically, details the developments since the adoption of the social control of the banks. According to the author, 'modern banking' started after the social control — especially after nationalisation of the banks rather than after the advent of the British in India as stated by various other authors. The basic purpose of an organised modern banking system is not only to provide deposit facilities and meet credit requirements but to play a key role in the money market and fruitfully guide the economy towards attaining a balanced growth and fulfilling the social objectives of the country. To achieve these, the author calls for a complete reorientation in the attitudes and ideas of bank management so that banks play a positive role in mobilising increased resources (deposits) and deploy such resources in a balanced and planned manner.

The author also details the different means and alternatives by which such objectives can be realised and presents a detailed treatise on the various aspects of 'marketing' services offered by the banks, techniques that may be adopted for deposit mobilisation, the necessity of planned expansion of bank offices and, above all, basic changes that are required in the management structure and quality of management. The author rightly places considerable importance on the use of modern management techniques in bank management including a proper information system and market research to which most of the bank management seem to be relatively oblivious as compared to other industries.

In the initial chapter, the basic concepts of the banking system and monetary theories are introduced which form the foundation of further detailed analysis of the effects of banking activities. Here the author uses, though not for the first time, the concept of treating banks as an industry. With this he proceeds to identify the problems relating to organising the materials (deposits) and marketing the products (bank services).

This theme is expanded in the subsequent chapters where the deficiencies of existing inputs including management inputs are brought out and concrete suggestions are made as to how these can be improved. Stress has also been laid on the necessity of expanding banking activities to rural sectors so that the present trend of 10 major cities having 50% of the deposits and 71% of the advances is broken. This, according to him, is the only way of bringing more money supply under the banking system which will have a cumulative effect on the total money supply situation in the country.

However, the author's ideas seem to pivot around social objectives only and in this respect suggestions relate more to a totally controlled economy where cost benefit analysis is in terms of social costs and benefits rather than the profitability of individual banks. In fact, the author does not attempt to make any cost benefit analysis for such generalised suggestions as spreading bank offices into interior rural areas and providing the right kind of expertise to the personnel of such branches, having a higher interest rate to attract deposits etc. The problem of reaching small depositors and borrowers is in reality more complex. The author does not present the complexities of such situations and in this respect some of the suggestions presented by the author seem to be too simplistic to be realistic.

However, some of the systematic concepts presented through logical analysis and diagrammatic representations are thought provoking. As a pioneering attempt to present the banking industry problems in their totality, Dr. Karkal's book deserves to receive due attention from practising bankers, students and money and banking experts.

D.P. Basu

Communications

AS Ashis Nandy has used the history textbooks as a stalking horse to try and make his points, I would like to comment on the specific statements regarding the books as well as on the general issues raised by him.

On the question of the involvement of academics with the government, Nandy's footnote wags the article. While the general drift of his text is that academics should keep clear of the government and even of semi-government organisations, the footnote explicitly recognises the role of autonomous public institutions such as the NCERT. If in our societies academics have to work with government, then this raises certain issues. What is important is to make sure that the integrity of the academic is not damaged by such an association. If an historian is willing to stand by every sentence written for an NCERT textbook, then the action of writing for the NCERT has no significance. Nor does the writing of such textbooks provide control of academic patronage or help to subvert public institutions.

Furthermore, if one kind of activity (such as the writing of NCERT textbooks) is to be attacked as damaging academic freedom, then a large range of other activities must also come under scrutiny, for example, area studies programmes assisting the policy of the External Affairs Ministry, socio-economic studies of 'backward peoples and areas', such as the scheduled tribes, where government policy towards these areas can be defined by the results of a number of government sponsored research projects; the participation of economists on various commissions determining government policy and action. The logic of Ashis Nandy's argument would lead us from what have become the regular targets, that is the textbook authors, to those who were in many ways more fundamentally involved.

Such an inquisition would be meaningless and lead nowhere. What needs to be done is to determine the relationship between the academic and the government in our kind of society, and to change educational structures so as to minimise government interference.

As for the specifics of what has been said about textbooks, it is important that such books be commissioned or withdrawn by the specialists in the field. It is not absurd to insist on this, because it is precisely at the level of school textbooks that the foundations for the study of the discipline are laid. If the quality of school education is to improve, then textbooks cannot be left to professional textbook writers who know next to nothing about the subject. Textbooks may not be learned treatises but they are part of the tools of a discipline, and this aspect cannot be brushed aside by the argument that since they are read by children they need not be vetted by professional specialists.

My primary objection to the proposed withdrawal of the textbooks is to the method by which this is being sought to be done. Had it been the Editorial Board in History of the NCERT taking such a decision, a serious dialogue on the historiographical basis would have been possible. I would still insist that political authority does not carry with it the right to pronounce upon the quality of a technical book. This point has evidently not registered at all with the government, for a recent newspaper report states that a textbook on world history used in Karnataka has been withdrawn on the orders of the Prime Minister acting on the recommendation of a cabinet minister. One's worst fears regarding the arbitrary withdrawal of books seems to be well founded.

The writing of textbooks does not become a political service merely because they are published

by the NCERT, as these books are not rammed down the throats of children and teachers. They were written as 'model textbooks' to be used in association with a variety of teaching aids. The NCERT does not prescribe these books. That is done by the Central Board of Secondary Education and therefore only in Central Schools are they prescribed. They are used extensively in private schools where they are selected without official pressure and in open competition from among a wide range of textbooks. State educational departments and the State schools are not required to use these books if they choose otherwise. *Medieval India*, for example, is only used in Bihar, Rajasthan and the Delhi Administration schools.

Ashis Nandy concedes at the start that he does not dispute the quality of these books. Why then speak of their authors as, 'Honest-to-God-Marxist' whatever that may mean? It seems to no purpose to place people in water-tight categories and thereby blur the varying ranges and shades of intellectual and ideological perception. The growing habit in our country of giving people labels in order to damn them does not assist precise and rational analysis.

The substantive contents of the textbooks are important since it is not simply a case of Marxist versus non-Marxist or Left versus Right. The attack on the contents of the books emanates from a position which presumes the return to a historiography of the 1920s and the 1930s, and this would mean a back-sliding in the discipline. R.C. Majumdar does not become my mirror image merely because he and his group now wish to replace our textbooks. The nature of their approach to the discipline and the contents of our books are of basic relevance. Which provides a relatively more scientific understanding of the past?

A curious feature of the whole debate is its timing. It is intriguing that only now has this debate taken such huge proportions. I was commissioned to write the two textbooks in 1964 and they were published in 1966 and 1967, before even the beginning of what Ashis Nandy has called the emergency in education. The first book, *Ancient India*, became the centre of a public controversy which lasted for almost six months. The background to this was that the Delhi Administration, then under a Jana Sangh government, decided to use the book but at the same time sought to delete certain passages relating to beef-eating in ancient India and the status of shudras. I do not recollect any academic at that time objecting to the principle of academics writing NCERT textbooks. Was this silence due to the fact that values such as self-esteem, autonomy and authenticity require a long period of gestation? For, one would hate to think that political convenience has anything to do with raising the matter now.

Protest is not the monopoly of the few. If it be argued that academics who are charged with becoming a part of the establishment do not protest

too easily, it then becomes incumbent upon those who regard themselves as remaining outside to be even louder. Let alone that, many now vociferous about academic freedom and the stigma of writing NCERT textbooks were totally inert during the national emergency, one is struck by the general silence of academics even in the pre-emergency 1970s. A small group now described as part of the so-called academic mafia of the early 1970s did protest even then on a variety of government actions, such as the attitude to Iranian students, the treatment of Naxalite students and even more crucially on the interference by government in the autonomy of a central university. Admittedly, the noise of this protest was not thunderous as there were too few protestors; but the protest was clearly made, it was discussed among academics and it was publicly known. What was sad was that when a wider group of academics was approached for participation in these protests they declined on the assumption that these protests were politically motivated and would therefore taint the purity of academic freedom.

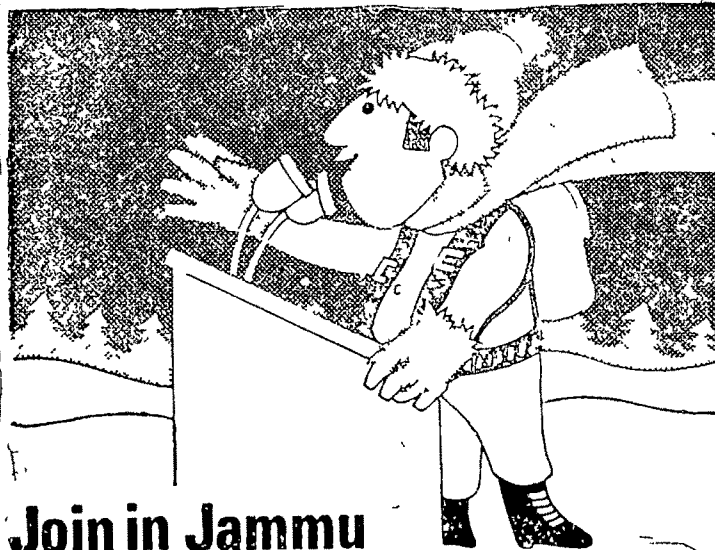
Clearly, a great deal of critical self-analysis is necessary by academics of all shades. But this exercise in soul-searching should not be allowed to degenerate into stone-throwing from any side. That would be totally self-defeating.

Romila Thapar
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi

IN your issue, SEMINAR 221, E.M.S. Namboodiripad has said that the immediate task of leftist and democratic forces is to usher in more radical economic reforms. One cannot deny the role economic policies can play in restructuring the country but the Marxists are obsessed with the economic interpretation of society. With the advent of many mathematical techniques this tendency has further increased. To quote M.N. Roy, 'Those who claim to give a wider interpretation of Marxism, define it as economic interpretation of history. That also is a vulgar interpretation of history. For one thing, Marxian interpretation of history is not economic but Marxism gives a materialistic interpretation of history and materialism is not concerned with bread and butter. Marxism includes economic theories, political doctrines and a program of political action because Marxism is a philosophy of life' (*Heresies of Twentieth Century* by M.N. Roy).

In India we have mainly two schools of thought. One school stresses cultural reforms more than the economic, the other stresses more economic reforms than cultural ones.

In the first school of thought, we have people like A.B. Shah, V.S. Naipaul, etc.. V.S. Naipaul has rightly said that Hindu culture has come to a dead-end. I feel he is correct in blaming Hindu culture for various ills in the society. The harsh



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reality that he portrays and the bitter truth that he brings out is pushed under the debris of Indo-phobia.

We have to make an in-depth critical study of Hinduism. 'The criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism' said Karl Marx. There are certain behaviour patterns among Marxists which are contradictory. They claim to be atheists but avoided the swearing in ceremony of the Marxist government in 1959 in Kerala during 'Rahu Kalam' (M N Srinivas in 'Modernisation' issue of *Seminar*). E.M.S. has admitted that caste plays a dominant part in Kerala politics (Kerala is supposed to be a progressive State). In a news item in the *Times of India* this month, a doctor found that most of the Bengalis believe in superstitions for curing diseases. Why these trends in Marxist dominated States? Why do they not challenge these superstitions? Is it because they are also part of this tradition? (A Marxist who is a supreme court judge has started believing in spiritualism.) Some contradictory behaviour is unavoidable when we are brought up in a highly superstitious society. Absolute consistency will take time but unfortunately we are not moving in that direction at all.

I am not denying the need for radical economic reforms. We need to evolve a philosophy which combines both the cultural and economic aspects. What I am trying to stress is a contiguity of ideas. We cannot say 'Let us forget Hinduism because we are atheists'. This is a form of escapism. We have to analyze and criticize specific practices of Hindus. If we stand for equality we have to criticize the theory of Karma and even the *Bhagavad Gita*. If we just say we are atheists, the typical reply is that atheists are also a part of Hinduism. There ends the matter.

Radha Kamal Mukherjee has found alignment of Buddhism and communism. 'Buddhism has shown not only a marked spirit of socialism and humanitarian service for the have-nots but also forbearance, mutual accommodation and co-existence in several regimes and cultures in Asia, not to speak of its remarkable organizational power. Buddhism and communism are largely conjoined for the amelioration of the oppressed masses not merely in Vietnam, but also in some measure in Indonesia, Ceylon and Burma' (*The Way of Humanism: East & West* by Radha Kamal Mukherjee).

The Marxists have to answer the following questions. Do they believe in historical materialism in the light of developments in new physics? Do they believe in determinism? If they believe in civil liberties, in what way do they differ from Euro Communists?

India needs a philosophic revolution: an economic revolution would depend on the philosophic revolution.

T.S. Ramnarayan,
Bombay.

SO MANY FREEDOMS

A Study of the Major Fiction of
Mulk Raj Anand

Saros Cowasjee

The author opens this study with a discussion of Anand's life and times to show the influences that bore on him and made him the novelist that he is. He then proceeds to examine in detail all of Anand's major fiction: from *Untouchable* (1935) to *Confession of a Lover* (1976). Cowasjee draws on much original material, and on criticism not readily available to the average scholar. He gives us a sympathetic and lively study of the novels of a man whose compassion for others, sensitivity of mind, and insight into characters have earned him a secure place not only in India but in all countries where Indian fiction is read.

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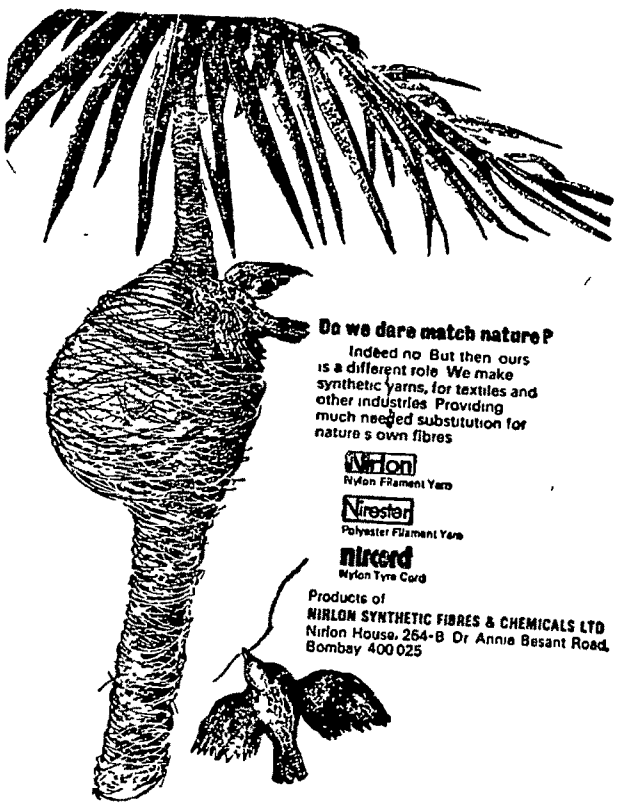
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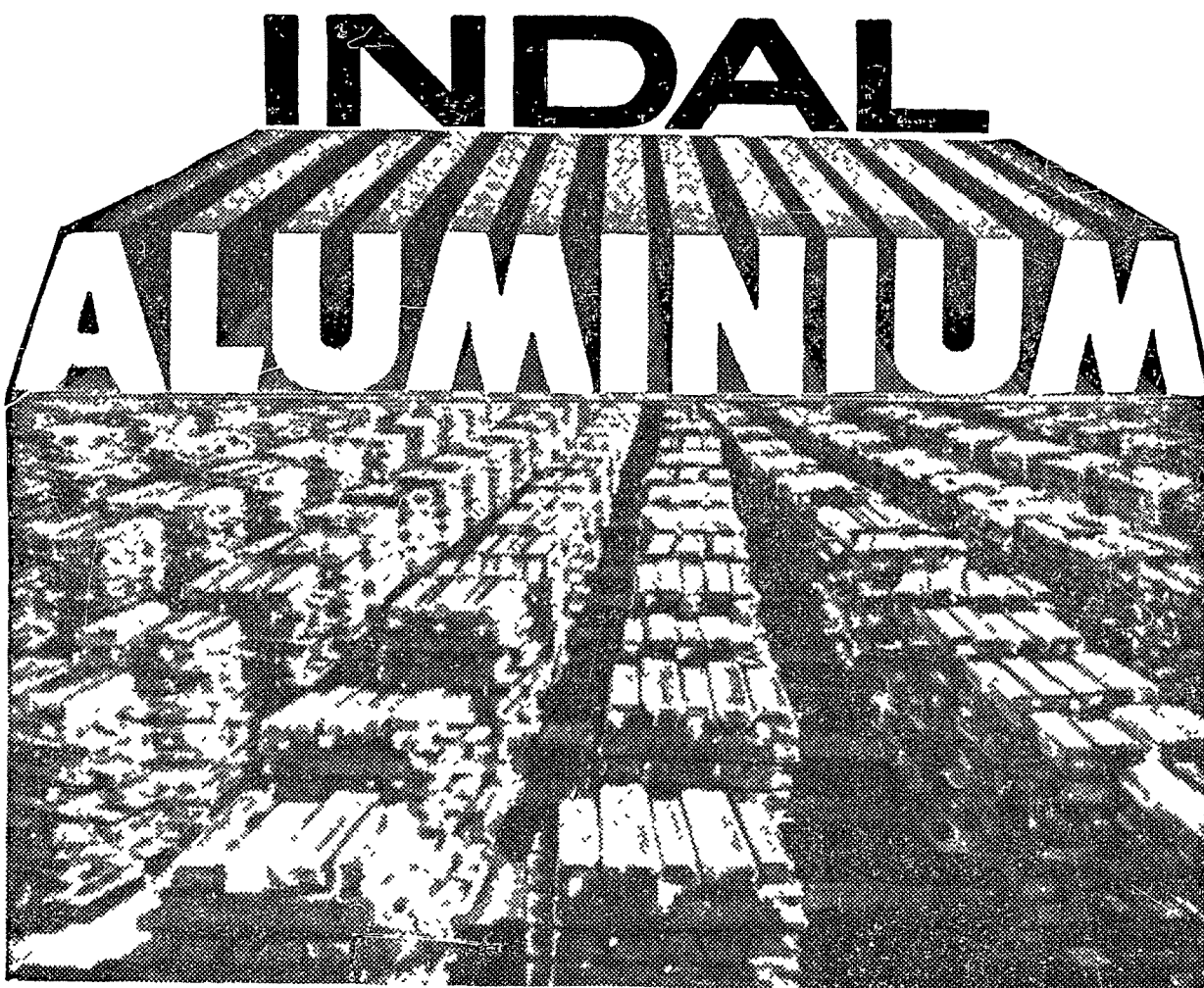
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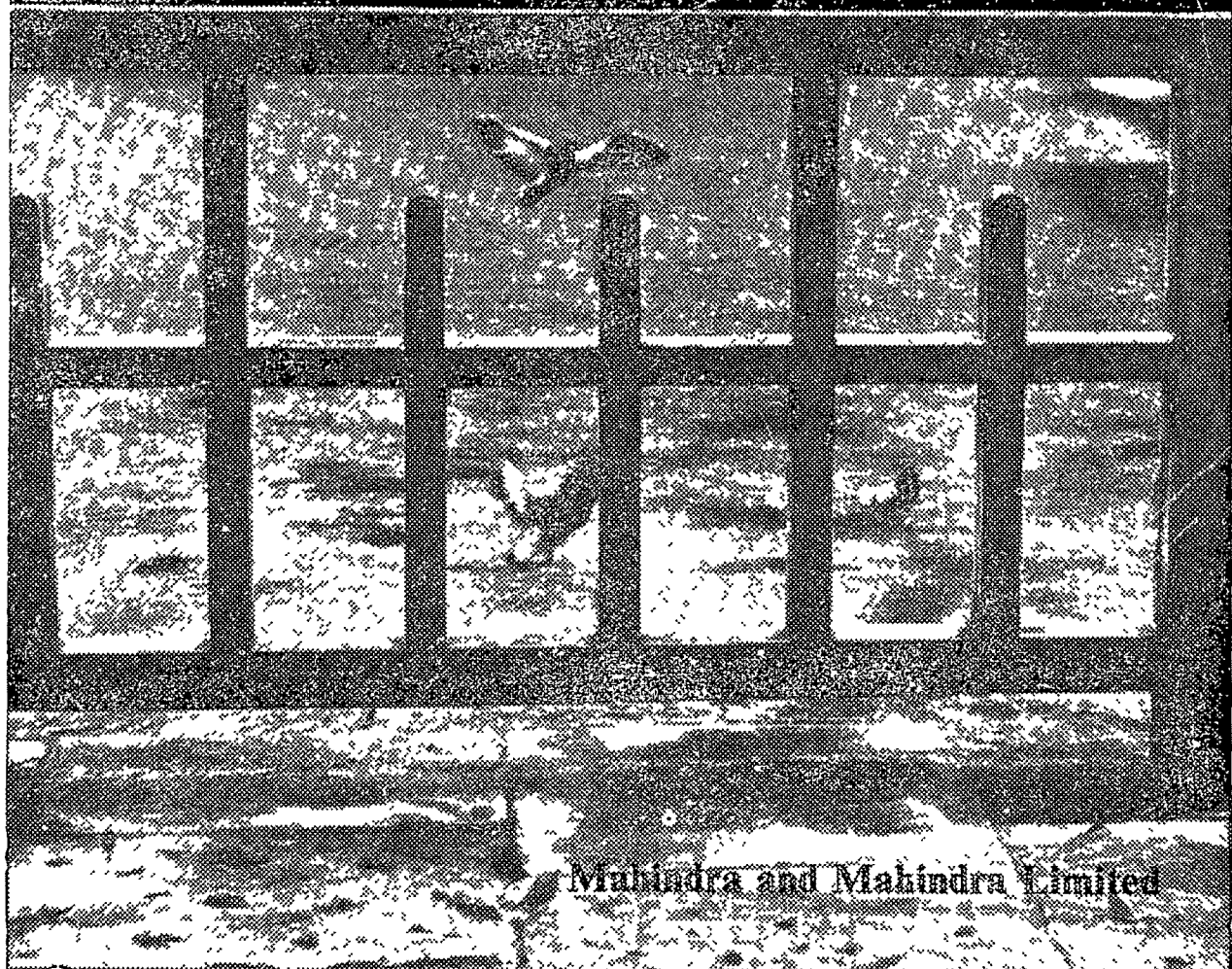


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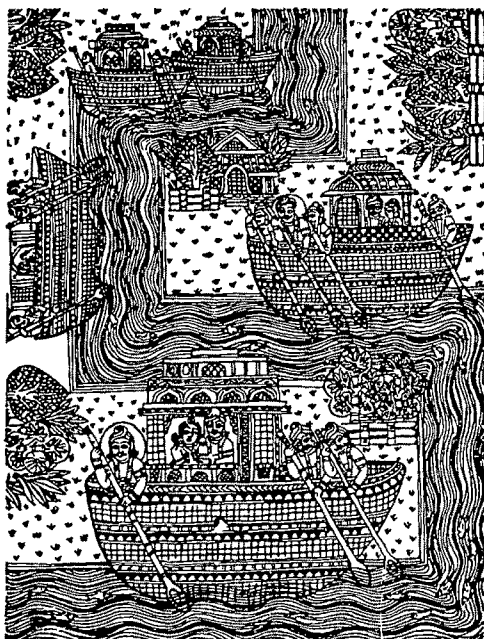
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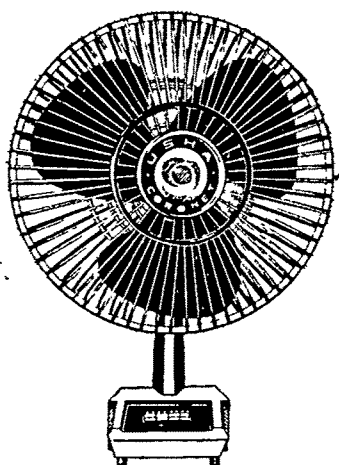
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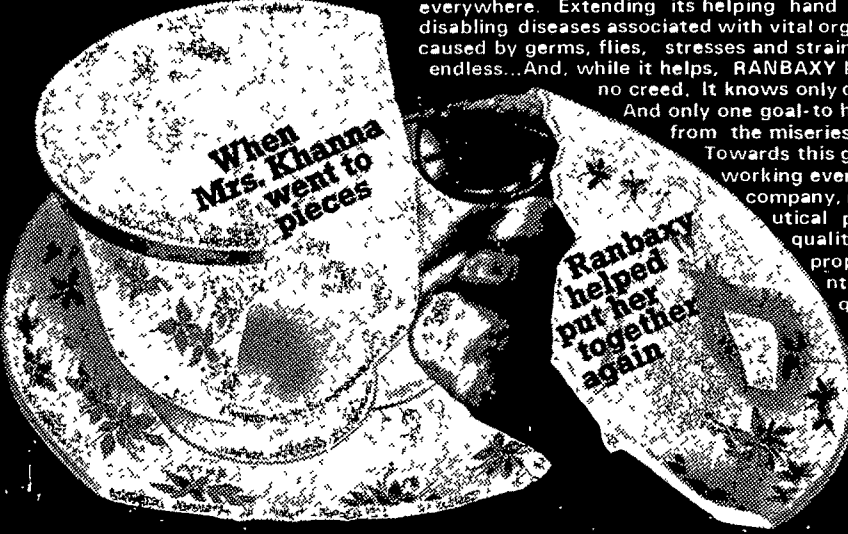
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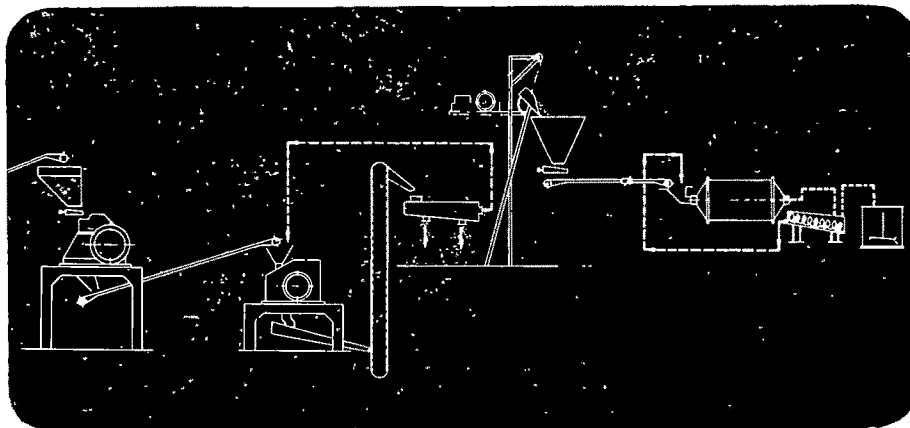


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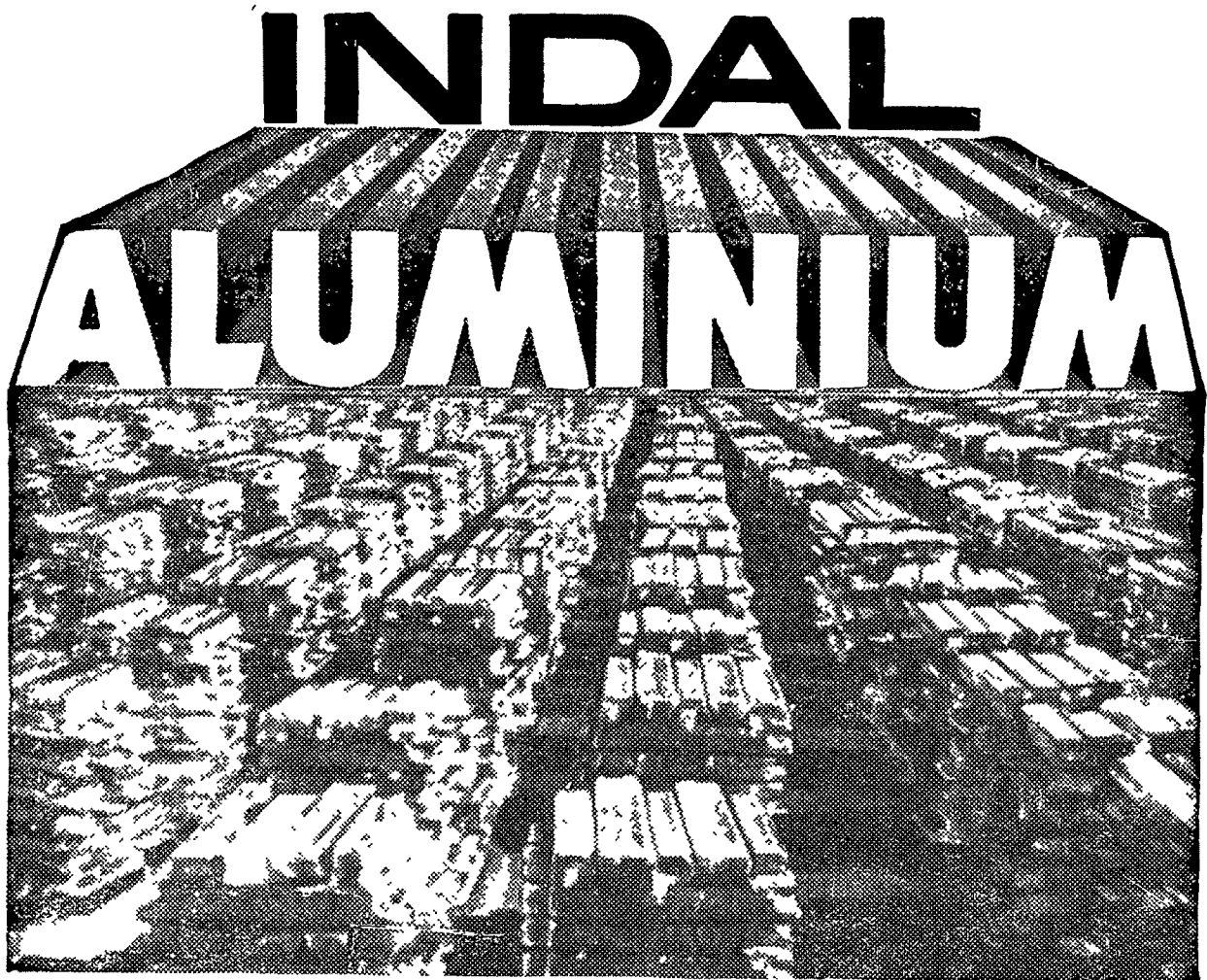
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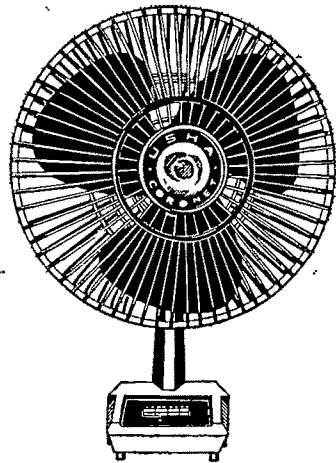


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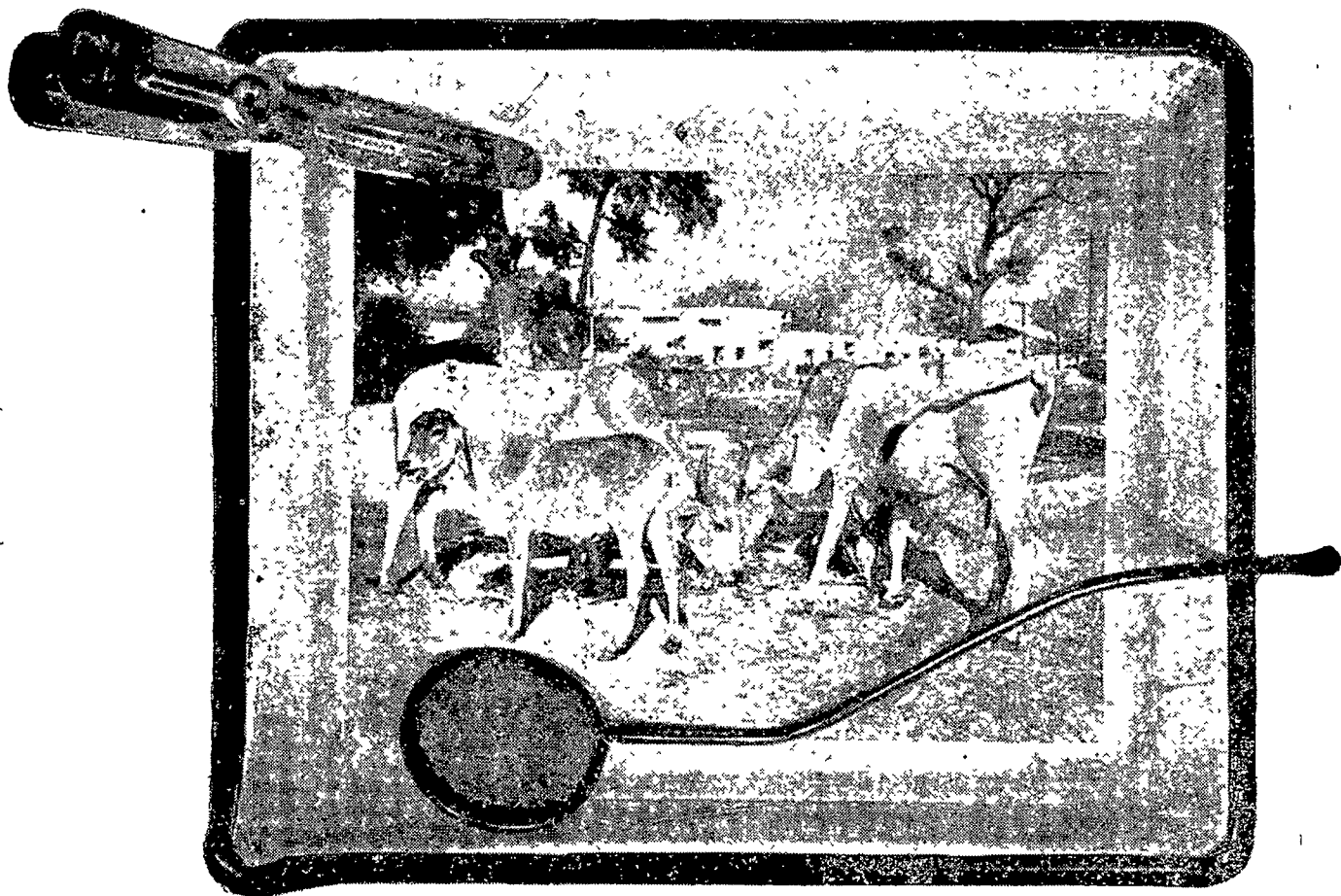


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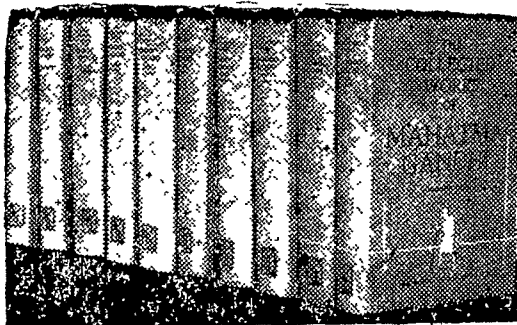
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a symposium on
the political trends
in the sub-continent

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COVER

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The problem

BACK in March 1977, experiencing a great sense of relief at the outcome of the historic parliamentary election, I was euphoric enough to tell a visiting scholar friend of mine that India has now turned the corner politically and finally made it as an open polity. My foreign friend demurred and suggested that it will probably be more appropriate to say that the March elections have provided a second chance; whether the open system is here for good or not will depend on how this second chance is used. The results of the Assembly elections just concluded lead me to believe that we have lost this chance — or almost lost it. Our politics has now entered a phase which is likely to be marked by major challenges to the democratic system and threats to its survival much more serious than those it ever faced before.

One predictable reaction will be to regard this as an extreme view and turn to the results of the February elections to argue that they do not reflect any significant change from March 1977 in the relative strength of the major parties to warrant such apprehensions. If the Congress is in office now in the three important southern States which went to the polls in February, it was in office prior to the February elections as well. If there is a marginal decline in the Janata votes in these States, there is also a similar — in fact a slightly larger — decline in the votes of the two Congress parties taken together. On the other hand, the Janata Party has acquired a presence in the legislatures of all the southern States which went to the polls in February.

Additionally, it has also succeeded in breaking the thirty year long hold of the Congress in Assam by obtaining the largest block of seats in the State assembly and replacing the Congress in office by forming a coalition government there.

The problem with this line of argument is that, while it is valid within the limited terms in which it is formulated, it misses the central significance of the election results. The point is not that the Janata has not fared any worse or the Congress any better than in March 1977. The point rather is that the recent elections have pushed the Reddy-Chavan Congress into the background and simultaneously thrust the Indira Congress to the fore. It is this development which makes for a significant qualitative difference between the situation before and after the February election.

In the Congress (I) the Janata now has to deal with a party which is very different from the Congress Party it faced before the February polls. Badly mauled in the March 1977 elections and again in June, the Congress was then a party on the defensive, searching for its democratic moorings and fighting for survival. Further, it was a party which, having denounced the caucus and acknowledged the damage the Emergency had done to the open system, was no longer available to Mrs Gandhi — a fact attested to by the creation of Congress (I). On the other hand, it showed by rejecting Mrs Gandhi's leadership its readiness to participate in

the process of shoring-up democratic institutions and practises

The Congress (I) is a different kettle of fish. It is a populist party with a populist leader *par excellence* who has persistently refused to acknowledge the monstrous character of her Emergency. Although she never admits her reservations about operating a democratic system, the striking ambivalence she has shown towards it is too obvious to be missed. Perhaps she is not alone in the country in holding an ambivalent attitude towards an open, pluralist, competitive system. But, like no one else among her contemporaries, she has the capacity to manipulate effectively, and on a national scale, the legitimate grievances and aspirations of the people in her drive for personal power.

The election results show that in the one year since March 1977 her hold on the loyalties of substantial sections of the masses, acquired earlier through populist politics, has not weakened nor has her ability to mobilise their votes been much impaired. If anything the electoral outcome has now given her all the psychological advantages that go with success, particularly when it is obtained under apparently unfavourable conditions.

More specifically, the success of Congress (I) has refurbished Mrs Gandhi's popular image of a clever politician who, ultimately, always manages to get the better of her adversaries, and given her the initial momentum which she desperately needed to

resume, what she probably hopes will be, her journey back to power. But what is perhaps equally, if not more, important is the fact that the outcome of the February elections has polarized Indian politics between those who have a mandate to maintain an open polity and those who first curtailed and then very nearly snuffed the democratic process under the pall of Emergency.

This development comes at a time when the task of consolidating democratic procedures and institutions is far from complete, and when the ruling party lacks the kind of public support and confidence to meet effectively the emerging Bonapartist threat to the open system without damaging the latter itself in the process. It is admittedly not easy to secure the foundations of a democratic polity, and indeed one year is too short a period anywhere to do so. But, surely, a year is time enough to make a significant beginning and to demonstrate the will and the determination to move in this direction. Instead, the moves taken so far suggest a singular lack of a sense of urgency in erecting barriers against authoritarianism through constitutional changes and through the creation of autonomies around and within the governmental structure.

The absence of a Janata majority in the Rajya Sabha may well have been a reason for this slowness. But it is difficult to escape the feeling that (a) the by now chronic reluctance of rulers to accept

arrangements which circumscribe their power and influence (as reforms of the kind needed inescapably would) and (b) calculations of short-term political gains have also been important in influencing the pace. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain why if the delay was due to legitimate reasons there has been no hesitation in conducting politics and using office and power in a style not very different from the old. From defections, to kisan rallies, to settling scores with political opponents, to withholding advertisements from unfriendly papers, there is in fact much that makes for a feeling of *deja vu*.

Nor is the story any different when it comes to performance in the other areas. Unable to resolve the internal problems of the party, the Janata leadership has failed to exhibit a clarity of purpose and above all, decisiveness in action in coming to terms with the real problems facing this country. In fact the image it has managed to project is that of a leadership with an odd sense of priorities in which considerations of moral and cultural well-being of the people seem to take primacy over the need for getting the economy moving and attending to the material needs of the masses. The kind of passion and alacrity shown in digging up the time-capsule, or the enthusiasm and remarkable speed with which the Janata State governments moved to implement the prohibition policy are conspicuously absent when it comes to handling pressing problems in other sectors of society and economy.

This is not to suggest that the promises made by the party are being disavowed by it, or that the steps to carry out some of them have not been taken or will not be taken. The problem rather is one of a wrong sense of priorities, of misplaced emphases and enthusiasm, of quixotic public positions and postures and of shockingly bad timing. The Janata's failure is one of style; and it is a massive failure. Nothing is more fatal to a party in the short run than this. For, performance in the sense of tangible results - from control of inflation, to expanding production, to rising GNP, to more employment and elimination of poverty - is always a matter of relatively longer spans of time. And, what is more, even failures of performance are not inevitably fatal to the rulers if positive results elude them after they have clearly put their best into the effort. On the other hand, steps to achieve tangible results become increasingly difficult to take when the public support and goodwill, which bring a party to power, rapidly disappear due to an initial failure of style.

This is precisely the situation in which the Janata Party has landed itself. It is now caught up in a maelstrom of demands from different social sectors. For instance, in UP and Bihar the Janata governments are now being pressed to meet the grievances, real and imaginary, of students, teachers, doctors, engineers, cane growers, tenants, agricultural workers, workers of sick textile and jute mills,

Harijans, and the Backward as well as the Upper castes. The gravity of the situation is, of course, not lost on the Janata Party, for its Central Parliamentary Board noted on March 13th that 'if the governments (in UP and Bihar) do not improve their performance and if socio-economic programmes are not quickly implemented, the simmering discontent will explode into violence'. But the problem now seems to be that the governments in these States cannot act even to meet the demands of some without provoking ferocious negative reaction from others. They are in a situation when they will be damned if they do and damned if they don't.

This possibility was driven home vividly by the events in Bihar when the government decided to increase by 26 per cent job reservations for the backward classes promised earlier in the Janata manifesto. While the backward classes were threatening the Janata government with dire consequences if it did not take this step, sections of the upper castes are now up in arms against it for having done so.

The intensity of their outburst, however, cannot be explained simply in terms of the recent job reservation decision of the Bihar government. It presumably reflects a dissatisfaction with the government, whether legitimate or not, which has developed over a variety of issues and over the last several months. It is possible that, had the Bihar government taken this particular decision in fulfillment of the party's programme earlier, the upper castes would not have reacted the way they have.

The irony of the situation is that those who have reacted strongly against this decision are the very elements who were in the forefront both of the struggle JP mounted in Bihar in 1974 and the Janata Movement which carried the Janata Party to power in 1977. But, as the Central Parliamentary Board of the Janata Party correctly noted, the developing situation is one in which the question of job reservations is now getting mixed up with accumulated grievances over other unattended issues of unemployment, inflation, fall in cane prices, etc.

What is more, times of increasing disenchantment with the government unfortunately are also the occasions when inner party differences get aggravated. Rather than bury the hatchet momentarily to jointly try to defuse the uncomfortable situation the government faces, this is when the out-group always intensifies its attack on the in-group. At least this has always been the case in this country in the past and, not surprisingly, is also the case now in UP and Bihar.

At the time of writing, lines have been drawn within the Janata legislature party in Bihar and a massive offensive has been mounted in UP to dislodge Chief Minister Yadav. Those heading this move are the same elements in the party whose earlier attempts in this regard had failed. The dissidents include the State's Janata Party Chief as

well as some of Yadav's colleagues in the cabinet. They have all voiced a lot of grievances, some genuine and some imaginary, which include, among other things, allegations of corruption, weak administration, political ineptitude, empire building and casteism.

In conditions of one-party dominance, which prevailed in the fifties and the sixties, a development of this kind rarely jeopardised the position of the party in office. In fact it helped, for it often led to a toning up of the administration and not infrequently to a much needed change in the direction of government policies. At the end of it all the hold on office of the dominant party was further consolidated rather than weakened. But what was sauce for the goose may not be sauce for the gander.

The fifties and sixties was a period when the Congress faced a fragmented opposition, what the Janata now faces is a strong rival with a populist threat in the Congress(I). And this at a time when its own hold on the loyalties, particularly of its new non-Jana Sangh and non-BLD supporters in the public, is becoming increasingly tenuous. If the internicine struggle within the Janata continues any longer it could, under these circumstances, turn out to be fatal for the ruling party in UP and may be in Bihar as well.

It will be a grievous mistake to underestimate Mrs Gandhi's capacity to exploit this situation in the north for making inroads into what now appears to be Janata territory. For her the problem in this part of the country is not the same as it is for the Janata in the south. It is important to remember that even when the undivided Congress suffered a major electoral set-back in the Gangetic heartland in March 1977, it did retain a significant proportion of the total votes polled at the time.

What is equally important to remember is that while the Janata votes registered an eighteen-point drop, on an average, in the June 1977 assembly elections in this specific area,¹ Congress not only held on to the votes it had in March but even managed to increase its share, albeit marginally, in some States. In UP, in fact, its vote increased from 25 per cent in March to 32 per cent in June, and the Party topped this performance by defeating Janata Party candidates in six out of the seven assembly segments of the Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency where Raj Narain had defeated Mrs Gandhi with a handsome margin just three months earlier.

It is, of course, not unusual for a party in office to drop votes. But neither is it usual for a ruling party to lose ground in a matter of three months as did the Janata in the north, and that too to an opposition party which was thrown out of office, not for ordinary failures but for running a glaringly capricious and arbitrary regime during the Emergency. The explanation for this cannot be in terms of peoples'

ignorance of the rapacious character of the Emergency, an explanation often given for the pattern of votes in the south. Even if one assumes this explanation to be valid for the south, (which, I have argued elsewhere, it is not) it certainly is not valid for the region where, what are euphemistically called the 'excesses of Emergency' were perpetrated on a large scale.

The real explanation perhaps lies elsewhere. But what needs explanation, however, is not just the results of the elections last June in the north or results of the recent elections in the south. These are only a consequence of a much more fundamental phenomenon which manifests itself most sharply in the relationship between the leader and the masses. It is this relationship which has changed over the last eight to ten years. The first intimation that the leader-mass relationship was changing was provided by the 1971 mid-term parliamentary election in which the Congress, badly mauled in the fourth general elections and split in the middle in October 1969, romped home obtaining a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

The party then went on to repeat this impressive performance in the State Assembly elections held a year after. Events moved so rapidly in this period that both politicians and professional observers of the Indian scene failed to grasp adequately the nature and the implications of the change indicated by these developments for the operation of our political system. Understandably everyone trying to find the source of these developments inevitably tended to focus on Mrs Gandhi, for she was indeed orchestrating the moves that led to them.

Initially, when she forced a split in the party and moved to nationalise leading banks and to abolish the privileges and privy purses of the princes, she was viewed as a reckless adventurer, a crypto-communist and a demagogue by her critics and as a true radical leader by her supporters. Subsequently, when after winning the election she kept the momentum going and was able to project the image of a leader with an uncommon sense of political judgement and timing, specially by the way she handled the Bangladesh crisis, even her worst critics abandoned their initial understanding of what she represented in Indian politics. Instead they accepted her as essentially a clever leader but one generously endowed with charisma — the ultimate product of all political alchemy.

By characterising her as a charismatic leader the emphasis inevitably was on continuity rather than change in Indian politics. India had had charismatic leaders before, first there was Gandhi and then Nehru, and under both the country had done well as it indeed was doing well again under her. The parallel was striking and the explanation both plausible and comforting. So long as the going was good and the leader benign, charisma remained the most widely used category to comprehend large parts of the Indian political reality.

1. i.e. Haryana, M P, Rajasthan, Bihar and U P.

But then Mrs Gandhi created through a variety of means a system of authority and decision making which allowed her to exercise almost complete control over party and government. Along with this came a touch of contempt and a more than normal show of firmness in her dealings with her cabinet colleagues and State Chief Ministers. For the most part they were treated essentially as instruments for carrying out her wishes and preferences. Her style as it developed exhibited a marked departure from that of her father. She herself underscored this fact when she said 'My father was a saint who strayed into politics. I am a tough politician'

While some applauded her style as the hall-mark of a great nation builder, others saw it as essentially an expression of the malevolent aspects of her personality. She was viewed as a leader with an inordinate drive for personal power, whose early life experiences had made her insecure, suspicious, and crafty and, therefore, incapable of sharing power with her colleagues, or of reposing trust in them and tolerating either their autonomy or political success.

There is much that is valid in such a psychopathological assessment of Mrs Gandhi. Indeed, it helps us understand a lot that happened during her tenure in office — from the treatment she meted out, at various times, to colleagues like Chavan and Swaran Singh and Bahuguna, to her calling the cabinet, not so much to consult it before imposing the Emergency, but to confront it with the Emergency as a *fait accompli*.

But, while such a view of Mrs Gandhi explains the various individual actions and deeds and her other responses in a variety of situations, it is limiting in at least two ways. One, it makes no provision for accommodating her demonstrated capacity to make rational and objective assessments of a wide range of political situations she faced, or the realistic and effective solutions she was able to come up with in handling them. For, it is these abilities which perhaps account largely for her successes and achievements at various times, both in and out of office.

Two, the concern with her psyche tends to abstract her from the larger social environment in which she operated, obscuring in the process the factors extraneous to her personality which, in an ultimate sense, determined both the style of her leadership and the basic character and dynamics of our politics in the late sixties and since.

Mrs Gandhi became the phenomenon she did by successfully expressing, as leaders of her kind elsewhere have always done, the deepest fears, hopes, aspirations, along with the emerging sense of destiny in important sectors of Indian society. It was because of this that Mrs Gandhi was not quite the freak, which the concern with her psychopathology would suggest, but a representative of her times the

way, J.P. Stern suggests, Hitler was of German society in the twenties and thirties of his country.²

Mrs Gandhi assumed the office of Prime Minister at a time when a deep sense of uneasiness pervaded the Indian milieu. A series of adverse developments both before and after she became the Prime Minister had aggravated the anxieties and insecurities of the politically aware urban middle classes. As a result they became even more conscious than before of the fragility of their newly founded State. Especially since tall leaders like Nehru were not around any more to protect and nurture it.

Ashis Nandy has identified a cluster of concerns which gained importance in Indian public life in this period.³ Among these he includes a self-conscious neo-nationalism, stoked-up as it were by military defeat and stalemates in the wars with China and Pakistan, and dependence on foreign aid, both economic and military.

Also, there was in the middle classes an equal concern about law and order and for purposeful politics, both of which they saw disappearing, first through the highly personalised style of boss and machine politics and, after 1967, through the failure of coalition governments, run in eight States by non-Congress parties, to operate effectively. Inevitably, an atmosphere of this kind continued to a devaluation of the idea of a plural society and made it appear as irrelevant as the emphasis on freedom seemed to be, to the needs of survival and growth of the Indian State. What the Indian public was then looking for was a leader capable of an 'aggressive affirmation of Indianness', a 'tough-minded pursuit of national interest' and of 'total commitment to ruthless *realpolitik*'.

It was by meeting such needs through her swift, decisive, often amoral but dramatically successful moves — beginning with the split in the party, followed by other dramatic episodes including the Bangla Desh war and, later, the ruthless suppression of the Railwaymen's strike — that Mrs Gandhi established a kind of bond with the public which no one among her contemporaries, or for that matter her predecessors, was able to establish.

If profound loyalty to Gandhi was a function of his saintly qualities and dedication to the cause of India's freedom, and Nehru's charisma was due to his deep love for his country, his compassion for the poor and a selfless devotion to the goal of India's advance, Mrs Gandhi's appeal was (and is) that of a tough and wily leader. It was the concatenation of circumstances which coincided with her assumption of office that gave a validation to these attributes of her's and bestowed upon them a legitimacy which she would have found it difficult to obtain in a different period.

2 J.P. Stern, *Hitler The Fuhrer and the People*, Glasgow, Fontana, Collins, 1975.

3 Ashis Nandy, 'India's Political Culture', Parts I and II, *Times of India*, May 13 and 14, 1977.

But this explanation will remain incomplete without reference to another important aspect of the decade in which Mrs Gandhi became the political phenomenon she is. This was the change in some crucial parameters of Indian politics, the result of the massive developmental activity undertaken by the government in the preceding two decades or so. Chief among these was a multiplicity of new relationships and dependencies, between rural areas and urban, between one region and another, between agriculture and industry, pulling these different elements into an increasingly well articulated system of nationwide interaction.

Since government was essentially the engine of this transformation it acquired a salience for more and more people in different parts of the country, for different social categories and groups than it had ever before. If Gandhiji's audience was almost entirely confined to the urban areas and Nehru's, in addition, included the rural elite, Mrs Gandhi had a much wider catchment area to operate in when she assumed office. The government developmental programmes coupled with the support mobilisation efforts of the parties beginning in the early fifties, had brought into the political community the deprived and persistently exploited and socially marginal groups always peripheral to our politics in the earlier phases. What is more, their entry into politics was accompanied by a weakening of the age long hold of the rural elite on the loyalties and actions of all sections of the village community.

Expanding opportunity structures, erosion of patron-client relationship through the commercialisation of agriculture had tended to undercut old authority patterns, while adult franchise and competitive politics allowed the numerical strength of groups to serve as a major source of power to countervail the wealth and land-based authority of the rural elite.⁴ These rural elite had provided the links between, on the one hand, the party machines and bosses and, on the other, the rural voters in the fifties and early sixties.

But with such changes in power equations within the village communities, the poor and the deprived were coming into their own and becoming increasingly available for direct mobilisation. And this is what Mrs Gandhi did, beginning with the mid-term election of 1971. The dramatic nationalisation of banks, abolition of princely privileges, the slogan of 'garibi hatao,' and the rest of the radical rhetoric captured the imagination of the deprived, the dispossessed, and those with a sense of being discriminated against both in the urban and the rural areas. It helped her project the image of a party and a leader determined to 'humble the mighty and help the country'.⁵

⁴ For a detailed elaboration of changes discussed in this para see my essay 'Managing the System,' *Seminar*, 216, August 1977.

⁵ W H Morris-Jones, 'India Elects For Change and Stability,' *Asian Survey*, August 1971.

The crucial thing here is not so much the nature of the promises made to the poor and the down-trodden, but the fact that Mrs Gandhi reached them just at the time they had gained political awareness and attained the minimum freedom from the constraints of the village power structure, to seek protection of their interests and change in their conditions. This is the psychological moment in the career of newly mobilised groups when the leaders who recognise their yearnings and aspirations and express such recognition, even if through rhetoric and symbolic action, manage to forge strong and powerful bonds with them.

And, once such initial loyalties are established, they are not easily broken. Even if the hopes and aspirations of the newly mobilised poor are not subsequently fulfilled, their trust and confidence, gained earlier, is rarely lost. This is the stuff which goes in the making of all populist movements and provides the key to the success of all populist leaders. Mrs Gandhi is no exception and let us make no mistake about this.

It was because of the direct rapport she managed to establish with the rural masses and substantial sectors of the urban public that she could get away with treating her party, her colleagues and public institutions, from the judiciary to the press, with disdain and contempt. But once her policies affected adversely the groups at the core of her populist support, it produced for her the set-back of March 1977. The expression set-back is used here advisedly, for there are indications that her loss of popularity with the public is not as enduring as one would have hoped for from the perspective of sustaining our open democratic polity. Populism can only be defeated when those who succeed a populist leader do better than him in attending to the needs of the people, both in a psychological and material sense.

This is where the Janata has failed. Lack of decisive action and the inability to provide a clear sense of movement forward are aggravating the fears and insecurities of the middle classes, while the legitimate needs and aspirations of the poor and the marginal elements of this society remain unattended to. The situation is once again ripe for a populist leader like Mrs Gandhi to cynically exploit in her drive for personal power. The results of the election in the south merely provide just the right break for her. From now onwards she is bound to exploit every opportunity the ineptitude her opponents creates to force the pace of her journey back to power. It will be an exercise in self-delusion to think that the Janata government has another four years to gear up and meet her challenge. The timeframe will be more like one to one and a half year, for the initiative will pass, if it has not already, into the hands of the blue-blooded populist that Mrs Gandhi is.

Kashmir

SHAMIM AHMED SHAMIM

THE accord that took place between Mrs Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah in February 1975 after two years' prolonged parleys, marks a watershed in the politics, if not the history, of the State. The arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, his imprisonment, subsequent externment, and declaring the Plebiscite Front an unlawful party had not only eroded the legitimacy of the accession but cast a shadow on the democratic institutions and the functioning of democracy in the country. Undoubtedly the use of force, repression and other unlawful practices had started in the Sheikh's regime itself in the 1951 State Assembly elections. But, after 1953, what passed under the pretence of elections in the State, and the manner in which the country's political parties and national press entered into a conspiracy of silence, accepting the suppression of justice, democracy and moral values as an unpalatable yet inevitable reality, left an indelible stigma on the fabric of Indian democracy.

I am firm in my opinion that all the experiments put to use in other parts of the country to pervert the electoral process with the help of government machinery, political repression and money power, were initially tried and tested in the laboratory of Kashmir. The repeated use of these reprehensible devices so dulled our democratic sensibility that the clamping down of internal emergency became not only possible but also acceptable, at least during the earlier phase. The facade of Assembly elections in 1951 and then bypassing the same Assembly

in 1953, deposing and arresting Sheikh Abdullah, signalled the starting point of a journey which twenty two years later finally culminated in overwhelming the nation with an internal Emergency.

Against such a back-drop, the Indira-Abdullah accord of February 1975, was a significant step towards normalising the political process in the State, and Mrs Gandhi quite rightly deserves kudos and credit for this act of statesmanship and farsightedness. Without conceding a single demand, she persuaded the Sheikh to accept the Chief Ministership of the State on Congress support.

Having remained in political wilderness for 22 years, Sheikh Abdullah, accepting the realities of the situation, renounced the slogan of self-determination, plebiscite and demand for restoration of the 1953 status of the State. For some time, however, he stubbornly insisted that he should be called the Prime Minister instead of the Chief Minister. Mrs. Gandhi granted it partially, allowing him to call himself Prime Minister if he so wished, but making it clear that the Centre would refer to him only as Chief Minister.

Although it is true that India's stand on Kashmir, its constitutional position and international commitments have in no way been affected or influenced by the accord, the State undoubtedly has undergone a qualitative change: a semblance of peace, stability and normality has entered the political scene. Notwithstanding his con-

troversial personality, erratic politics and short-sighted perspective, Sheikh Abdullah continues to be the most charismatic figure dominating Kashmir politics, holding the centre of the stage for the last 50 years as a symbol of Kashmiri nationalism

To cap it all, his dismissal, arrest, imprisonment, externment, in fact every insult and injustice inflicted upon him has given him a martyr's halo, making him more and more popular. Consequently, he has emerged as the most outstanding example of Kashmiri aspirations. The efforts of his successors and the Centre to keep him out of politics and power proved so counter productive that to extern or imprison him at every subsequent election in the State, became an unavoidable necessity upto 1971. The Sheikh and the Plebiscite Front made their task easier by boycotting those elections. But when he decided to participate in 1971, the State Government had to impose restrictions on his entry into the State and to meet this danger the Centre had to declare the Plebiscite Front an unlawful party.

These undemocratic and high handed methods gave rise to a self-seeking, self-seeking class which wielded unbridled authority to do whatever it liked in the name of loyalty to the Central Government and the ruling party. To deal with Sheikh Abdullah and his incendiary politics, the Centre was compelled to support these 'loyalists'. Thus, we got into a vicious circle, with little hope of extricating ourselves.

Whatever the motives and considerations that weighed with Mrs. Gandhi and the Sheikh in forging the accord, its incontrovertible end product is the possibility of breaking this vicious circle, and being released from the anomalous and monopolitical stranglehold of the Congress on the politics of the State. The March 1977 revolution has given to these possibilities a clear and concrete shape. As a result, for the first time after Independence, the Sheikh and his party, the National Conference, have come into power, after the conduct of what were compara-

tively free and impartial elections. In fact, it is such an extraordinary and revolutionary change that it would have been impossible even to think of it a year earlier. This pleasant but unexpected turn to the situation must have been a surprise for even Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues

In January 1977, before the declaration of general elections, the Sheikh held talks with Mrs Gandhi on the distribution of Assembly seats between the Congress and the National Conference on a basis of equality. The distribution of parliamentary seats had in fact been done on this very principle of fifty-fifty. Had Mrs Gandhi won the elections, it was likely that he would have found it difficult to secure even 50 % seats. But, whereas the March 1977 elections liberated the country from dynastic rule and bondage of fear, it also set free the Sheikh and his party from the shackles of political compromise and agreements

The manner in which the Sheikh lent his unreserved and unqualified support to Mrs Gandhi and the Emergency after having become the Chief Minister, pointedly highlights the fact that he had not accepted the realities of a changed situation resulting from a change in ideology or mental attitudes, but as the single entry-point to the place of power. For this very reason, the political accord proved the starting point of many of his compromises on principles and points of view and, right up to Mrs Gandhi's debacle in March 1977, he continued making compromises with his avowed stands at every step. Such a climbdown, though hardly in harmony with his political stature and popular image, was an inevitable consequence of the Sheikh's political style and the background against which the accord was forged.

For Mrs Gandhi, the accord had all the advantages. Without conceding anything she achieved all that her father failed to achieve in his life time. The process that had been set into motion with the withdrawal of the conspiracy case against the Sheikh in 1964 had

been left half way through because of Nehru's death. Eleven years later his daughter led it to its logical conclusion. Jawaharlal was unhappy with Sheikh Abdullah's separatist politics and pre-Pak stance. He wanted the Sheikh to accept the accession as final. The Indira-Abdullah accord represents the fulfilment of this wish. But, for Sheikh Abdullah, the agreement was no more than a charter of unfulfilled hopes and shattered dreams.

It was the outcome of his frustration and disillusionment. In spite of 22 years of imprisonment, exile and isolation from the position of power, he had seen no light emerging from anywhere. Meanwhile, a new generation had come to the fore. And this generation was free from the kind of emotional attachment which bound the elders to him. On the other hand, they held him responsible for those involved political entanglements, the complexities of which had shadowed their birth and growth. On the one hand, notwithstanding his stature and popularity, the fact of his being out of power coupled with the demands of practical politics had gradually rendered him irrelevant, on the other, the power blocks had lost interest in the Kashmir issue and the Security Council resolutions on Indo-Pak relations attracted the idle curiosity of research scholars only. Pakistan too had ceased to sustain life in a receding hope which petered out finally in 1965.

Dejected by Pakistan, the Sheikh eventually gave up the politics of non-cooperation and decided to participate in the elections in 1971. It is a pity that the State and Central Governments prevented him from doing so, imposing restrictions on his re entry into the State. This frustrated him further. The defeat of Pakistan in the Bangla Desh war of 1971, shook him to the roots, delivering a crippling blow to his determination and resistance. Not only had Sheikh Abdullah refused to condemn the barbaric policies that Pakistan pursued during the early days of military intervention in Bangla Desh, but in an interview published in a Hyderabad Urdu

daily, he had justified the actions of General Yahya Khan and the notorious Tikka Khan

The breakdown of the Pakistan war machine and the creation of Bangla Desh now fully and finally convinced him that Pakistan could no longer keep the Kashmir issue alive. Thus, he turned to rebuild his broken bridges with Mrs. Gandhi. It must be said to the credit of Mrs. Gandhi that she seized the opportunity and encouraged the move. Had the present Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, been in her place, he would possibly have lost the opportunity by his stubborn attitude and rigid behaviour. In fact, after the creation of Bangla Desh, when Sheikh Abdullah chose the path of reconciliation, giving up the posture of confrontation, Mrs. Gandhi got him installed as Chief Minister with the help of the Congress majority in the Legislature.

In spite of being a significant step towards normalizing the political life of the State, fundamentally the accord was an agreement between two individuals and nothing more. It had no legal or constitutional validity. Between February 1975 and March 1977, it came to breaking point on many an occasion and the credit goes to the Sheikh that he saved it from getting snapped, albeit at the cost of his self-respect and personal pride. Precisely for this reason, the Congress Party withdrew its support to Sheikh Abdullah from the legislature and practically finished the accord after its defeat in March 1967. What followed has put a stop to the artifices and artificialities of the politics of agreements, providing an opportunity to build the State politics on more firm, lasting and purposeful foundations.

The recent changes in the politics of the State must be welcomed from this point of view. The present government and its leadership has come into existence through free elections and public confidence, instead of political agreements and personal expediency. Thus, for the first time during the last 30 years, the democratic process has been allowed a free flow along its natural course.

There is no denying that to win the Assembly elections Sheikh Abdullah had fanned feelings of communalism, internal autonomy, parochialism and regionalism. He had created such an atmosphere that quite a few political observers, while conceding the elections to have been free, refuse to accept them as fair. But, to use a biblical image, would there be any politician in the land who could pelt the first stone at him?

It is worthy to note that to ensure his success at the polls the Sheikh, instead of banking upon his sacrifice, popularity and charisma had to take recourse to such trite and tried manoeuvres which are used by ordinary professional politicians. Some say that to influence the voters and evoke their sympathy, he even prolonged his illness. Whether this is true or false no one can tell. But there is no doubt that Sheikh Abdullah staked everything to win the last elections.

It goes to the credit of the Janata Government that it allowed the freest elections to the State, for the first time since independence, thus proving to the people of Kashmir that they too have the same fundamental democratic rights which the people in the rest of the country enjoy and exercise. In particular, for the Muslims of the valley, it was an incredible phenomenon that only two candidates of the ruling party at the Centre—the Janata Party—were returned out of the 42 seats it contested. In the past, some eighty to ninety percent candidates belonging to the ruling party used to win with 'large majorities'. From this point of view alone, the July 77 elections represent an important experiment in the politics of the State which are bound to yield good results.

While the results of the '77 Assembly elections have demonstrated in full measure, Sheikh Abdullah's impressive strength they have also set limits and exposed the shortcomings of his success and influence. For instance, it is significant that the National Conference, in spite of its secular and noncommunal cast, has emerged only as a

representative party of the Muslims in the State. That explains its slender image in Jammu where it received only seven out of a total of 32 seats and its all pervasive position in the valley where it bagged all but three of the 42 seats.

It was the direct result of communal preaching and regional stance projected by the party during electioneering. In fact, if the Janata rebels had not contested the officially fielded candidates and thus divided the vote, the National Conference would hardly have managed a seat or two in Jammu.

Another significant factor to note is that in spite of the charismatic personality of Sheikh Abdullah and the calmly thought out slogans, calculated to heartwarm sectarian feelings, the National Conference was able to muster only 46% of the total votes polled, even though it secured 49 seats. In other words, the Sheikh won the election but lost the plebiscite. Let alone the fact that the Janata Party and its allies got a severe bashing at the hustings, it has brought stability to State politics and promoted the national cause in an extraordinary measure.

The recent political changes and developments in Jammu and Kashmir affirm that there are no shortcuts to political stability and national stability and national integrity other than the democratic ones. The traumatic experience that the country passed through during the Emergency, and the current political situation in Pakistan, emphasized its importance even more clearly. Likewise, it is certain that the democratic system cannot be sustained, much less strengthened in the rest of the country if it is suppressed in a part of it, be it Nagaland or Kashmir.

Now that a normal political process has been set into motion in Kashmir, it should not be prevented from taking its logical and natural course by raising the sceptre of the threat to national solidarity, the country's interest and territorial integrity as in the past.

In view of his earlier secessionist postures, some quarters are some-

what apprehensive about Sheikh Abdullah's recent statements and utterances regarding the internal autonomy of the State. In my opinion, however, there is no need to read any far-reaching ambition in these public postures and statements. The fundamental fact is that he accepts Kashmir as an integral part of India, and regards Kashmir's accession as irrevocable and final.

It is well known that in spite of getting tremendous moral and material support from Pakistan during the last 22 years, the Sheikh has at no stage been in favour of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Having now acquired power through free elections, he could have little use for Pakistan. On the contrary, he has been talking of the return of Pak-occupied territories to the State. His demand for his inclusion in any talks that India holds with Pakistan regarding Kashmir, betrays a psychological aberration rather than any political ambition. This is the nostalgia of the fifties, when big power interests in Kashmir and debates in the United Nations and other international forums kept him in the limelight, making him an international figure.

The most interesting aspect of Kashmir's current politics is the absence of any ideological base and economic programme in the State's most organised and influential organisation, the National Conference. True that it had a socio-economic programme called 'New Kashmir' before independence. But in the present day context, the document is an historical anachronism. In the euphoria of the newly acquired power in 1975, no attempt at redefining political aims and economic goals was made, while the Plebiscite Front was rechristened the 'National Conference'. On the contrary, Sheikh Abdullah repeatedly emphasised that we should give a 'holiday' to politics for some time and get down to work.

After the imposition of Emergency, he was even more emphatic about this. But when all the equations of power and politics underwent a sea change, consequent upon the March 77 election, the National Conference leadership became keenly

aware of the absence of political ideology and economic programme. To tackle this problem, Sheikh Abdullah tried to smoothen the way for an understanding with the new Central Government and Janata leaders, so that under a new arrangement he continued to hold the reins of power. Fortunately for the State, the Janata leadership refused to have any such understanding and Kashmir was saved from yet one more spell of the 'politics of agreements'.

It was only when he had failed to strike this bargain that the Sheikh, raising the issue of internal autonomy and of safeguarding article 370 during the Assembly elections, created an artificial atmosphere of confrontation between the Centre and the State, although the Foreign Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, while participating in the debate on Karan Singh's motion of adjournment against the imposition of Governor's rule in the State, had clearly stated that no change would be made in article 370, without consulting the people of the State. Despite the fact that he too knew fully well that the Janata Government had no such intentions, the Sheikh, in search of an election issue, 'invented' the spectre of danger to internal autonomy and Article 370, generating tremendous sympathy for him and support for his party.

The true nature of Sheikh Abdullah's interest and concern for the State's internal autonomy and safeguarding of article 370 is, however, betrayed by his and his party's unconditional acceptance of the 42nd amendment during the Emergency. A committee appointed under the chairmanship of Afzal Beg, the Vice President of the National Conference, described the amendment as 'consistent with the needs and demands of the time,' although it considerably eroded the country's federal structure and the State's internal autonomy. In terms of the amendment, if Parliament chose to abrogate article 370 of the Constitution, the State Government and Sheikh Abdullah could not have knocked at the Supreme Court gates, and Sheikh Abdullah and his party, instead of protesting against it, welcomed it.

The recent Sheikh-Jyoti Basu talks and statements regarding more and more autonomy to the States should be assessed against this background. With the Sheikh, autonomy is his total politics, with Basu an important weapon to carry forward his social aims, in conformity with his political ideology. It is only to emerge as the 'defender of the faith' and make up for the absence of a politico-economic programme, that the Sheikh wants to create a sense of insecurity among the people of the State. Personally I am in favour of granting a greater measure of internal autonomy to the States, particularly in the economic field, but the manner in which Sheikh Abdullah and his successors have used it throughout to suppress the democratic rights and civic freedoms of the people, leaves much room for doubt about its concept and content.

It would not be out of place to mention the Public Safety Ordinance promulgated by the Sheikh and his government in this connection. Sheikh Abdullah's demand for internal autonomy is qualitatively different to the demand of greater powers by the other States. The Sheikh's demand has overtones of secessionism and communalism, because he links the issue of autonomy with accession. The State comprises three units, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The demand for 'internal autonomy' represents, at best, the aspirations of the Kashmiri Muslims. On the contrary, the people of Jammu and Ladakh consider it as part of a plan of Kashmiri domination. Considered in this context, Sheikh Abdullah's leadership of this rightful demand of the other States is likely to prove a liability rather than an asset.

The Sheikh's advantage is that he has no political or intellectual commitment and that is why he can flit across freely and without invitation, from a Marxist Jyoti Basu, a fascist Indira Gandhi, to an orthodox Imam Syed Abdullah Bukhari. The greatest contribution of Sheikh Abdullah to the politics of the State is that he played a prominent role in secularising it. But it is an irony of history and a paradox of

present times that he himself has been in the fore in creating communal and separatist feelings among the Muslims. The reason is that he has throughout made use of the religious idiom to preach secularism; so that whenever he has had to seek support of religious sentiment for personal advancement and aggrandisement, he has conveniently made religion a tool of politics, and politics a tool of religion.

At any rate, that is his political style and there is no escape from it. The tragedy is that Kashmir politics have stagnated under this style and stunted the growth of the Kashmiri people. Consequently, in this last quarter of the 20th Century, Kashmiris find themselves in the darkness of tribal ways of thought and reaction, prejudices and fears. The geographical conspiracy of nature to shut Kashmir up in a trap has been further strengthened by politicians by strengthening these barricades rather than breaking them down.

In this analysis, I have dwelt in detail on Sheikh Abdullah's personality and political attitudes. It was unavoidable. For, the Sheikh has been the fountain-head, centre and pivot of Kashmir politics for the last 50 years. Any objective analysis of Kashmir politics is bound to prove incomplete without an analysis of this subjective aspect of his personality. This undoubtedly sets the seal on Sheikh Abdullah as an extremely popular leader, wielding tremendous political influence, but it also points toward the mental and political backwardness of Kashmir, where persons matter more and issues and ideologies less. The fact is that politics in Kashmir has yet to be released from the stranglehold of religiosity and ritual.

Consequently, the population, in terms of alignment and allegiance, is divided between different religious leaders, the Sheikh and Mirwaiz Farooq being the main contenders. The former uses the famous shrine of Hazratbal as his political platform and the latter the historical Jama Masjid of Srinagar as his political fortress. Taking their cue from them and encouraged by their successful manoeuvres both

Shia and the Jamaat-Islami leaders have joined the political game. Jamaat-Islami, ironically, was encouraged by the ruling Congress Party in its efforts to enter the political arena with a view to steal Sheikh Abdullah's thunder. That explains why the party secured 5 seats in the State Assembly in the 1972 elections.

But it is almost impossible to beat the Sheikh at his own game. The political influence of the Jamaat vanished overnight when it clashed with him in the panchayat elections of 1974 and in the recent Assembly elections. The party has managed to get only one seat in the State Assembly. The Shia leaders are also busy organizing their followers for political purposes and thus renewing the age-old Shia-Sunni conflict. The recent clashes between the two sects is symptomatic of the growing politicalization and exploitation of the two communities.

Among the other political parties the Janata Party, the two Congresses and Mirwaiz Farooq's Awami Action Committee deserve some mention. The Janata sapling is unlikely to strike roots in the valley. Its constituents, Jana Sangh, BLD, Organisation Congress and Socialist Party, did not exist in the valley, hence there was no ready-made cadre available to the Janata Party when it started functioning in the State in April, 77. Sheikh Abdullah too delivered a stunning blow to it by calling it the 'Jana Sangh in a different garb'.

Finally, the utter defeat it suffered at the polls has completely disheartened those who rallied under its banner. The state of the party in the valley can be judged from the fact that it cannot get a couple of rooms for its central office in the city of Srinagar. In other words, the party has no postal address.

As against this, in Jammu, it built up on the existent Jana Sangh base. Whereas the party has not even a central office in Srinagar, in Jammu it has several parallel offices. On account of the tug and pull between the Jana Sangh and non-Jana Sangh elements in Jammu, the party is in utter confusion which

the Central leadership has yet to sort out. The increasing influence of the erstwhile Jana Sangh spells grave danger for the party's future as the minority community in the region would prefer joining the Congress or the National Conference rather than the Janata.

In the valley, the existence of the Congress, right from the beginning has depended on the prestige of the Central Government, the power and the vested interest that surround it. That explains its disintegration after its removal from the seat of power. The split at the top has staggered it further, and sizeable sections of Congress workers are switching over to the Janata and National Conference. In Jammu, the Congress though in a more stable position, has suffered considerably due to the split at the national level. The emerging position has exposed and exploded the myth of Karan Singh's popularity and influence in Jammu where the bulk of the Congress has gone with Indira Gandhi, whose faction appears stronger than the Reddy Congress. This may be partly due to the Sheikh's support and sympathy for Indira Gandhi.

Mirwaiz Farooq is essentially a religious leader but his political ambition is not unknown. During the Assembly elections in July 77, he threw his lot in with the Janata by supporting it. However, only one candidate fielded by his party, the Awami Action Committee, won. He and his party are considered to have Pak leanings. But changes in the Indo-Pak political scene have reduced his influence which is anyhow restricted to the few areas of Srinagar city alone. One of the healthier aspects of the process of normalization of State politics since July 1977, is the complete eclipse of the secessionist elements in the valley. Mirwaiz Farooq's support to the Janata Party (and he continues to be friendly) was a significant factor in this direction. Whatever may have been his reasons for supporting the Janata Party against Sheikh's National Conference, it clearly indicates the qualitative change in the extremist politics of Kashmir and Kashmiri leaders.

Karnataka

R K. HEB SUR

WITHIN sixty days of his dismissal, Devaraj Urs and his party, Congress (I), have bounced back into power in the State of Karnataka. As the Assembly elections of February 1978 approached, political observers conceded that the real contest was only between the Congress(I) and the Janata. But, many were not prepared for Urs' near repetition of his 1972 performance. He had to fight with a new symbol. He is reported to have suffered from shortage of funds. Unlike during the March 1977 Parliamentary elections, he was out of power during the 1978 Assembly elections and the official machinery was under the control of the Governor.

In the first week of January 1978, the Karnataka Congress had split neatly in the middle, and roughly half of his colleagues, like K.H. Patil, Mohammed Ali, H. Siddha-veerappa, had stayed with the (Reddy) Congress. Some of Urs' own supporters in the deposed cabinet, like M.Y. Ghorpade, H.M. Channabasappa, S.B. Nagral did not contest the elections. To add to these handicaps, the Grover Commission had found him 'guilty' on four charges of nepotism and favouritism. Still, he won handsomely.

The Janata Party had mobilized all the resources it could in its bid to capture power. One of its general Secretaries, Surendra Mohan,

was stationed in Karnataka to supervise the selection of the candidates and campaigning. Another General Secretary, Ramakrishna Hegde, has been a veteran of Karnataka politics. Not only many Janata ministers at the Centre, but the Janata Chief Ministers of a few Northern States as well, were pressed into the campaign. The party was calculating that its chances in the State had improved, because the stories of the Emergency atrocities in the north had begun reaching the people of Karnataka during the months preceding the elections, and the fear psychosis was no longer there. Congress Party votes had indeed declined from 71 per cent in the 1971 Parliamentary elections to 57 per cent in the 1977 elections — a drop of 14 points. On the other hand, the Janata Party had obtained nearly 40 per cent of the votes then. Just before the February 1978 elections it felt encouraged by the defections into its fold of a few Congress M.P.s and junior ministers. In the allocation of the party tickets, the party gave nearly as large a share to the backward and Scheduled castes as did the Congress(I). In its promises to the electorate too, it sought to outbid Urs and the Congress(I). Still, it lost obtaining only 59 seats out of the 222 contested.

In the recently concluded Assembly elections, the Congress has been

wiped out as a political force in the State. It could win only two seats out of the 212 contested. The hard core of the party consisted of those erstwhile ministers and legislators whose hostility to Urs became increasingly crystallized and intensified after the Congress debacle and the fall of Mrs. Gandhi in March 1977. In fact, the State Congress feuds between the KPCC President, K.H. Patil, and Urs during the closing months of 1977 were bound up and intermingled with national party struggle. This rivalry provided at least one of the issues over which the factions at the national level fought and split. The Patil faction finally brought about the downfall of Urs on December 31, 1977.

In comparison, in no other Congress-governed State was the linkage of the national Congress factions with the State factions so deep and divisive. Those Karnataka Congressmen, like K.H. Patil, N. Hutchamasthi Gowda, H. Siddha-veerappa, S.M. Krishna, V.L. Patil, Mohammed Ali, who were ranged against Urs, were not considered to be political light weights or sub-regional leaders. Still, their party was humbled, raising the question of its very survival at the national level.

It would be too facile to attribute the victory of the Congress (I) in Karnataka to Mrs. Gandhi's general popularity alone. No doubt she and Urs are popular. But the popularities of leaders are rooted in the perceptions, experiences and expectations of the people. The deeper reasons of the success of the Congress (I) lie in the ability of Urs and the State Party to assemble, generally from among the weaker classes and minority caste groups, a viable support base, through many policy measures, some concrete and some symbolic. Urs' leadership has been in tune with the recently emergent social forces in the State, in whose mobilization he himself has played an historic role. These developments can be better understood in the background of the evolution of Karnataka politics, particularly in the last seven years.

The present State of Karnataka (Mysore till 1973) was formed in 1956 by joining the 4 Kannada speaking districts of Bombay, 3 districts of Hyderabad, 1 district of Coorg, and 2 districts of Madras to the 9 districts of the old Mysore State. The Vokkaligas who are estimated to form about 13 per cent of the total population of Karnataka, and whose strength is confined to about seven districts of the old Mysore area, were the dominant caste group in the former part B Mysore State. The Lingayats, constituting about 17 per cent of the population are concentrated in three of the four districts of Bombay Karnataka, the three districts of Hyderabad Karnataka, the Bellary district of Madras Karnataka, and a couple of peripheral districts of Mysore Karnataka as well. The Brahmmins, constituting only about 3% of the population are thinly spread over the State, though they are found in larger numbers in South and North Kanara districts. The other caste groups include the Scheduled castes, Reddis, Kurubas (Shepherds), Lambadis, Bantas, Namdharis, etc.

A few scholars have analysed how the formation of the expanded Mysore State in 1956 affected the numerical strengths, and hence the political power balance, of the different caste groups.¹ The centre of political gravity shifted to the newly integrated areas of the State. In the part B State of Mysore, the Lingayats, too, had been a political force to be reckoned with, but second only to the Vokkaligas. The reorganization, by bringing in the heavy Lingayat districts of Bombay

and Hyderabad areas, and Bellary, tilted the political balance in favour of that caste group. For the next sixteen years, it enjoyed the political primacy in the State. The MLAs from the Bombay area rightly felt released from the Marathi-Gujarati dominated politics of the trilingual Bombay State, and came into their own. In the erstwhile Bombay State, the Kannada areas never had more than one cabinet ministership and a couple of deputy ministerships.

From 1956 to 1971, the Bombay and Hyderabad areas together had around 6 to 8 Cabinet Ministers,² a substantial section of whom were Lingayats. Occasionally, there were a couple of Lingayat Ministers from the old Mysore area as well. After 1956 the Vokkaliga share in the ministership was reduced. The Brahmmins as usual continued to have a representation of one or two ministerships, which has been quite out of proportion to their numerical strength.

Thus, Congress politics in Karnataka between 1956 and 1971 came to be dominated by the two numerically large caste groups of Lingayats and Vokkaligas, with the former having an upper hand. The opposition parties, like the local Janata Paksha, or the Socialists and Communists were utterly insignificant. All the four Chief Ministers during the period, Nijalingappa, Jatti, Kanthi (whose was a short stop-gap tenure) and Veerendra Patil belonged to the Lingayat caste groups. The last three of them came from outside the old Mysore area. Even Nijalingappa, who hails from Chitradurga in the old Mysore area, had to, after 1962, seek safe constituencies in the Bombay Karnataka area. A majority of the substantial landowners in the State belong to these two dominant castes. A sizeable portion of commerce, particularly in foodgrains, is in the hands of the Lingayats in the northern districts. With the introduction of the Pan-chayati Raj and the growth of the cooperative movement, the two dominant communities built a good network of power and patronage.

1 K.S. Mune Gowda, 'The Influence of Caste in Mysore Politics', in Iqbal Narain (Ed) *State Politics in India* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967), pp. 588-595, B.B. Patil-Okalay, 'Karnataka: Politics of One Party Dominance', in Iqbal Narain (Ed) *State Politics in India* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1976) pp. 129-145, Glynn Wood and Robert Hammond, 'Electoral Politics in a Congress-Dominant State, Mysore 1956-62' in Myron Weiner and J.G. Field, (Ed) *Electoral Politics in the Indian States: Party Systems and Cleavages*, (Delhi: Manohar, 1975), pp. 143-160, James Manor, 'Structural Changes in Karnataka Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XII, No. 44 (Oct. 29, 1977, pp. 1865-69).

2. Wood and Hammond, *op cit*

What came to pass was not a system of dispersed inequalities,³ but one tending toward cumulative inequalities.

This is not unique to Karnataka alone. In all the Indian States, the rural landed gentry has combined in its hands political power and sources of agricultural wealth. In the case of Karnataka, those elites who combined in their hands both economic and political power, generally, if not wholly, belonged to the two dominant caste groups. It must be admitted, though, that in the popular image, the Lingayat hegemony between 1956 and 1971 is a little exaggerated. The Chief Ministers had to, as Manor argues, accommodate the Vokkaligas demands.⁴ The upper echelons of the Karnataka bureaucracy never came fully under the control of these two caste groups.

In the immediate aftermath of the first Congress split in 1969, Karnataka was still a bailiwick of Nijalingappa and the Congress (O). Chief Minister Veerendra Patil, most of his cabinet colleagues and most of the legislators of the undivided Congress stayed with the Congress (O). At that time, Devaraj Urs, who had not been considered a top ranking Congress leader between 1956 and 1969, assumed the stewardship of the Indira Congress. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1971, the Indira Congress won all the 27 seats. At the time of the distribution of the Congress (I) tickets in 1972, Urs reduced the representation of the two major caste groups of Lingayats and Vokkaligas and gave a larger representation to the backward and scheduled castes. As Wood and Hammond have argued, he accommodated those younger leaders who had been kept out by the old Congress.

Both these factors, and the crumbling of the vote banks, contributed to a similar unprecedented success of the party in the Assembly elections of 1972. It won 52 per

cent of the votes and 76 per cent of the Assembly seats (165 out of 216). The Congress (O), whose government had fallen a year earlier, polled only 26 per cent of the votes and won only 24 seats. The Jana Sangh polled only 4 per cent of the votes without winning any seat. The CPI, Socialist Party, Maharashtra Ekkaran Samiti and the Independents shared the remaining few seats. Urs became the Chief Minister in 1972. He belongs to the tiny Arasu caste, to which the former ruling house of the Princely Mysore State belonged.

Until his deposition by the Centre on the last day of 1977, Urs ruled the State and controlled the legislature party without any real challenge. His tenure as Chief Minister has been the longest since 1956. This he managed to do by adopting means and policies, some of which are conventional and some others very unconventional. He has surpassed the earlier ministries in the distribution of spoils and patronage. He shifted the centre of political gravity to the old Mysore region again. He changed the name of the State from Mysore to Karnataka, which had not been possible for the earlier cabinets. He reduced the representation of the dominant caste groups of Lingayats and Vokkaligas in the cabinet.

By consciously mobilising the weaker sections of the society and minorities, he built for himself a solid base which has stood him in good stead. Urs' (and Mrs. Gandhi's) image with the minorities can be gauged from the fact that in 1972, his Congress put up 31 scheduled castes candidates and 26 were returned. The Congress (O) had put up 26 scheduled caste candidates, but only 2 won. On the eve of his assumption of the Chief Ministership, Mrs. Gandhi is reported to have asked Urs how he could hope to become the Chief Minister, since he did not belong to either of the dominant castes. He is said to have replied that the elections had not been won on the basis of castes, but classes. In his refrain, the minority castes are roughly equated with the poorer classes.

Like the Congress parties of any other States, the undivided Congress

before 1969 and the Congress after 1972 in Karnataka have been wracked by factions. Earlier, the factional leaders engaged themselves in a kind of a closed struggle. In their struggles, none of the factional leaders resorted to competitive mobilisation of the masses. Urs' sought till the end to outsmart his opponents not only by distributing spoils, but also by mobilising weaker minority castes through many policy measures and invocation of populist themes.

One such measure was the appointment of a new backward classes committee under the chairmanship of L.G. Havanur, which recommended a reclassification of the backward castes and reservation of posts, which went against the interests of the dominant caste groups. It has been made obligatory for the cooperative societies, the focal points of rural social, economic and political power, to induct a few committee members belonging to the backward classes. A large number of the government corporations came to be headed by politicians belonging to the scheduled castes.⁵ In the latter years of his administration, Urs has claimed that about 40 per cent of the State budget was earmarked for the welfare of the backward classes. (There are many allegations that the benefits have not always reached these classes). Another measure was his controversial land reforms legislation of 1974, which needs to be examined in some detail.

Immediately after the reorganization of Mysore in 1956, different kinds of land legislations, with varying provisions and degrees of radicalism, were in force in the different areas of the State. The legislations in force in the Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras areas were more radical in intent than the one that was prevailing in the old Mysore area. The Bombay Act of 1956 was particularly more progressive. It had amended the Tenancy Act of 1948, which itself had been passed by an assembly elected

3. See Robert Dahl, *Who Governs*, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961) on the importance of the dispersal of inequalities.

4. Manor, *op cit*, Wood and Hammond, *op cit*.

5. Ajay Kumar, 'Karnataka: Indira Congress, May be', *Sunday*, Feb 19, 1978.

on a limited franchise in 1946. In 1957, the Mysore legislature ostensibly to gain time to frame a uniform land policy, suspended the operation of the Bombay (1956), Hyderabad and Madras Acts. In the Bombay area, the 'land to the tiller' day was postponed. The Mysore government then appointed a committee under the chairmanship of B.D. Jatti, to make recommendations for a new legislation incorporating the recommendations of the committee, a land reforms Act was passed in 1962, but it actually came into operation in October 1965.

In other words, during this period of nearly a decade, the process of making the tiller of the soil the owner had been halted. Many landlords ousted the tenants either through courts or through social pressures. Prosperous landlords purchased more lands, reduced the tenants, most of whom belonged to weak minority caste groups, to the status of agricultural labourers, and started having two establishments, one in the village, the other in the nearest town. Even the Act of 1962 (which became operative only in 1965) was a retrograde step in many ways, although it was euphemistically described as 'realistic'. It fixed the ceiling rather low. It excluded from its purview the rich plantations, growing cardamom, coffee, arecanut etc. Moreover, it provided the landlords liberal legal means to resume cultivation, after effecting nominal partition of land. All this was consistent with the interests of the landed dominant castes gentry forming the support base of the Nijalingappa, Jatti and Patil ministries.

Striving to carve out a new support base for himself, Urs got a new land reforms Act passed, which came into force in 1974. The Act made the following provisions: (1) All tenancy lands, including the disputed ones, were vested in the government. (2) Decrees of eviction of the tenants made on certain grounds were stayed. (3) All pending tenancy cases had to be disposed of as if the Act of 1974 was already in force in 1965. (4) Ceiling was fixed relatively high, and took into account the irrigation

facilities. Then came Urs' master stroke. (5) The occupancy disputes were to be decided not by civil courts, but by special tribunals for each Taluk set up by the government. The tribunal has an Assistant Commissioner as the (nominal) Chairman and four other members, one of whom is an MLA and another a member belonging to the scheduled castes or tribes. No lawyers are allowed before the tribunals, and appeals to the High Court are barred.

Although laudable and revolutionary, Urs' land legislation came 18 years too late. Since 1956, the structure of land-ownership itself had been allowed to change, putting many substantial farmers beyond the scope of the Act. But, it was a boon to those tenants, generally belonging to the weaker minority castes, who had clung tenaciously to the land. This measure caused a lot of furore and is still being debated. Urs systematically packed the tribunals with his own loyal supporters.

It was openly alleged that the tribunals were ridden with corruption. The recently retired Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, G.K. Govinda Bhat, openly accused that tribunal members had been making money. He also complained that a concerned Karnataka Minister had advised a member of a tribunal to 'earn as much as he can, but to give half to Indira'.⁶ The sitting

Chief Justice of the High Court, Justice C. Honniah, described the land tribunals as 'bogus'. He also said that the Court had come across innumerable instances of cyclostyled judgements of the tribunals.⁷ After the dismissal of the Urs Ministry, Governor Govind Narain alleged that the land tribunals were motivated by party considerations, and not by the requirements of justice to the rural poor. Many landowners according to him, had proclaimed themselves as the members of the tribunals.⁸ By a notification issued on February 6, 1978, the Governor removed the non-official members from the 185 land tribunals. This step was taken not merely to set right the anomalies of adjudication, but to prevent the non-official members from influencing the voters.

There is another way of examining Urs' socialist performance. The amount of agricultural income tax a State government levies is a good index of its ability and willingness to dispense with the support of the rural rich. The following table shows the amount of agricultural income tax as a percentage of the State's own tax revenues, raised by the Karnataka government from 1968-69 to 1974-75.

This table reveals that after Urs' accession to power in 1972, there has not been any significant increase in the contribution of the agricul-

6 *Deccan Herald*, Jan 23, 1978, *Samyukta Karnataka*, Jan. 24, 1978

7 *Deccan Herald*, Jan 1, 1978

8 *Deccan Herald*, Jan 19, 1978

Financial year	Agricultural income tax (Accounts) Rs in lakhs*	State's own revenues (accounts) Rs. in lakhs	Ag. income tax as a % of State's own revenues
1968-69	165	7,677	2.1
1969-70	157	8,829	1.8
1970-71	155	10,174	1.5
1971-72	199	11,359	1.7
1972-73	208	13,263	1.6
1973-74	143	15,039	0.9
1974-75	161	19,859	0.8

* (Figures are from the Reserve Bank of India *Bulletins*)

tural income tax to the State's revenues. It is difficult to reconcile this with his land reform policy. Probably, he believed that the latter was more dramatic. On the whole, Urs' land policy may have been culminated both to keep the MLAs and politicians loyal to him and to help the tenants belonging to the weaker minority castes. Whether he was completely successful in doing both is debatable. It cannot be denied that many leaders of the dominant castes, within the (pre-second split) Congress as well as outside, were unhappy with Urs' tilt toward the minorities and the methods employed by him.⁹

Urs' Congress (I) contested this time 212 out of the 224 seats in the Assembly and left 10 seats to the CPI, RPI (Gavai) and AI ADMK. The list of the candidates of the Congress (I) included 117 persons belonging to the backward classes and scheduled castes, and only 72 to the Lingayats and Vokkaligas. During the campaign, Mrs. Gandhi and Urs emphasized their socialist image and concern for the weaker sections. Even on the eve of the March 1977 parliamentary elections, Urs had predicted a *second* Congress split over 'class struggle'. He had said that the Congress 'had to restructure itself in the light of new reality that caste barriers had broken down'.¹⁰

During the campaign, he kept on reiterating this theme of class struggle. By winning 151 seats (67.4 per cent of the total strength of the Assembly), he has obtained a resounding affirmation of his policies. The victories of the Congress (I) are spread all over the State, with the exception of a few pockets. The successful candidates have generally won with comfortable margins. This could probably indicate that in the rural areas, the Congress (I) has cut into the votes of the dominant castes as well, by weaning away their poorer sections. The Muslims and the Christians have stood by the party. The percentage

of the votes polled by the Congress (I) has, however, come down from 57 per cent in 1977 to 44 per cent. Even if we add the 8 per cent of the votes polled by the Congress, there is still a decline of 5 per cent.

Urs' leadership in the party is now unassailable. Due to the second split, Congress (I) has rid itself of those who were thorns in Urs' flesh until a couple of months ago. He has been trying, and will continue to try, to expand his support base beyond the backward classes, scheduled castes and minorities, to include the poorer sections of all the communities. He cannot expand his base, and hold it together, by populist measures, rhetoric of class struggle and symbolic distribution of spoils, alone. Assuming that all the tenants gain complete ownership rights, the land legislation will lose its steam. But, other poor will still remain. He will soon be required to reduce the disparities in rural wealth. It is doubtful whether he can do it with the kind of administrative system and party apparatus he has.

The Socialist and Jana Sangh components having been very weak in Karnataka, the Janata Party initially came to be dominated by the former Congress (O), with the C F D playing second fiddle. A couple of the Congress ministers and some legislators were also admitted to the party. After its failure to win more than two Lok Sabha seats in the March 1977 elections, H D Deve Gowda, a Vokkaliga, replaced Veerendra Patil as the Chairman of the State Janata Unit. This was intended to win more non-Lingayat votes. The party fielded 222 candidates. It was acutely conscious of the fact that its erstwhile component, the Congress (O), had been generally associated with the Lingayats. It really tried hard not to be identified with either them or the Vokkaligas. It sponsored almost as many candidates belonging to the backward classes and minorities, as the Congress (I) did. In this, the party tacitly accepted Urs as the prime pace setter of Karnataka politics. It tried to outbid the Congress (I) by promising not only a clean administration, but also speedier implementation of those

land reforms which Urs had initiated. Ultimately the party won only 59 seats.

Even this represents a considerable improvement of the party's position, for it had obtained a majority in only 21 assembly segments in the March 1977 Lok Sabha elections. But, its successes have been concentrated in a few pockets. It won 9 out of the 12 Bangalore urban, and 7 out of the 13 Bangalore rural constituencies. The party seems to have developed a base among the urban middle classes, cutting across caste lines. These are the people on whom the proceedings before the Shah and Grover Commissions, and the revelations of the Emergency excesses presumably had an impact.

It is common knowledge that the rigours of the Emergency were not much experienced in the State. The cases of the tragic demise of Snehalata Reddy and torture of Michael Fernandes have not cut much ice with the rural electorate. The Janata Party won 8 out of the 9 constituencies in the Mandya district. Not only the Vokkaligas who dominate that district, but other caste groups as well, seem to have supported the party, due to their resentment over the local issue of the Varuna canal project. Contrary to expectations, the party fared poorly in the districts of Shimoga, Chickmagalur, and Hassan which have traditionally been known for their anti-Congressism. The district of South Kanara, where the incidence of the tenancy disputes is very high, also let the party down. It has polled 38 per cent of the votes, a marginal drop of 2 per cent from the 1977 level.

Both the Janata Party and the (Reddy) Congress tried to make an issue of the charges of corruption and patronage against Urs. As the results indicate, the rural electorate particularly did not perceive it to be a crucial factor. Like the revelations of the Emergency excesses, the issue of corruption may have had an impact only on some sections of the urban voters.

In general, the present base of the Janata Party consists of the

9. The *Hindu* of April 2, 1977, reports one such meeting of a dominant caste Congress legislators, who were dissatisfied with the Urs' policy of reservation of jobs.

10. *Indian Express*, March 21, 1977.

urban middle and lower middle classes, and the rural better-off sections of the dominant castes. It would probably be a mistake to say that the party's strength is confined to these groups alone. In many constituencies the party has run close to the Congress (I). Due to its (Janata's) conscious policy of giving a lion's share of the tickets to the weaker sections, the party must have obtained the support of some of these groups as well. One thing is very clear. To be able to survive and succeed, the party must engage itself in competitive mobilization of the weaker sections. It is possible that in course of time, they may fall out with one another. Some weaker sections may perceive that the benefits have accrued, not to them, but to others. In such a situation, the prospects for the Janata will brighten.

The Reddy Congress, headed at the time of the elections by K.H. Patil, was completely squeezed out in the keen competition between the Janata and the Congress (I) to woo the backward classes, scheduled castes and minorities. The party did not have any kind of a policy issue to take to the people, except the charges of corruption and authoritarianism in the Congress (I). But, until yesterday they were all the colleagues of Urs. In the popular image, the leadership of the (Reddy) Congress comprised persons of dominant castes eager to settle political scores with Urs. The party put up 209 candidates but won only 2. As mentioned above, the party has polled only about 8 per cent of the votes. The party has fared relatively well only in a few constituencies. But, that is due to the personal influence of the candidates there.

Among the other parties, only the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti has done well by winning five seats in the Belgaum district. Until the boundary dispute is satisfactorily solved, the MES will continue to repeat its success. Neither the Congress (I) nor the Janata can absorb this movement. K. Hanumanthaiya, a veteran Congress leader, left the party in December last to launch his own Surajya Party, whose aims

were to provide clean administration and a small ministry. Later, his efforts to merge the Surajya Party in the Janata failed over the question of allocation of seats. The former fielded 29 candidates, all in the old Mysore area and not one of them won. Most of them lost their deposits. Hanumanthaiya was the Chief Minister of the Part B State of Mysore from 1952 till a few months before the reorganization of the State in 1956. In the popular mind he is associated with the Vokkaliga oligarchy of the yesteryears. He is no longer acceptable even to the younger leaders and voters of that community, let alone to the populace at large. Any alliance with the Surajya Party would have been more disastrous to the Janata.

The DMK and the AI ADMK tried to win in the few Tamil speaking pockets mainly in the Bangalore urban area, but failed. They had respectively fielded 5 and 11 candidates. Another splinter party, the Janata Congress, headed by N. Rachaiiah, also totally failed. Vatal Nagaraj's Kannada Chaluvaligars put up 22 candidates, and all were defeated. Nagaraj is well liked by the Kannada enthusiasts. But Karnataka has not produced even a mild form of Kannada sub-nationalism. The sort of conditions which facilitated the rise of the DK, DMK, AI ADMK in Tamil Nadu and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra do not obtain in the State. All the 10 candidates of the CPM, with whom the Janata could not reach an agreement, were defeated. The CPI has won three seats, the R.P.I (Gavai) and Muslim League have won one seat each.

The party politics in Karnataka has now become more competitive and polarized. Despite the huge disparity in the seats won by the Congress (I) and the Janata, there is a difference of only 6.5 per cent in the votes polled. Between them they have cornered most of the votes. Both the parties are committed to the strategy of wooing the weaker sections. At least the conditions now exist which might facilitate the airing of increasingly progressive solutions.

In the east

SIVADAS BANERJEE

DURING the recent Assembly elections, the problems of India's sensitive north-east region received renewed emphasis, which might appear due or legitimate to some and undue or exaggerated to others. This, of course, is by no means a denial of the existence of these problems. But the question that has been uppermost in the immediate context is how far or whether at all the elections might have brought a reasonable and, one should hope, a lasting solution nearer

One does not need to be very imaginative to have an idea of the magnitude and complexities of the problems. The region has common borders with Bangladesh, Burma and China. It comprises Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram, which represent an endless variety in terms of topography, ethnic groups, religion, culture and language and levels of socio-economic development.

However, among the tribals, who are numerically predominant in most of these States and Union Territories (having a total area of 250,000

sq. km. and a population of 19 million), there is a basic commitment towards traditional norms of democratic functioning which apparently have withstood the test of time and have imparted to the people an unexpected level of awareness of the need and efficacy and even the intricate details of the present-day parliamentary system.

So ingrained have been such sentiments that in spite of their regard and affection for Indira Gandhi, who by a single stroke had granted full statehood to five and status of Union Territory with elected legislatures to two (Mizoram and Arunachal) in 1975, they felt immediately alienated because of the way she split the Congress, had she instead followed the earlier course of having a requisitioned AICC meeting, she might have kept her base secure among these people. At the same time, the fact that needs to be faced is that most tribal-dominated regional parties in this part of India continue to be watchful about the Janata Party because of its composition. Their attitude of collaboration with the Janata

Party, therefore, is, for a long time, likely to be prompted more by the pragmatic desire and necessity of staying on the right side of the central authority, which is also the largest dispenser of funds, than any lasting understanding

Undoubtedly, the level of exposure to the process of socio-economic changes which are taking place throughout the country has been different in different parts of this region, so naturally has been the impact and the resultant economic and political aspirations. How far other and extraneous considerations might have come into play in making up these attitudes can be discussed later. However, throughout the region there is a growing desire for self-reliance or self-government. This may have found a particular form of expression in Nagaland and Mizoram, and prompted the people in a less distorted attitude in the others. However, basic political developments throughout may still be largely unconnected, but for how long one cannot tell.

For the sake of this analysis, it may not be quite proper to keep the mainly Nepali-speaking areas of Darjeeling district in West Bengal and Sikkim out of the purview. This is because any sizeable migration and settlement of the tribals all along the foothills in Assam and parts of other States have already become a major emotionally charged and controversial socio-economic (if not political) issue among the tribals in this entire region. It has become more so, for example, in Bhutan or Meghalaya since Sikkim's political upheaval that subdued the Chogyal. Almost all the parties in Meghalaya want a ban on fresh migration from Nepal and Bangladesh. In Bhutan, Nepalis or Gorkhas are not generally allowed into the inner line areas. However, the reasons for such moves remain mainly economic.

In Darjeeling district particularly the demand for inclusion of the Nepali language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution is very evident even though the related demand for an autonomous unit appears to have been pushed to the background, at least for the time being. Or, again, another demand

raised in the mid-forties for a separate Uttarkhand State, comprising all contiguous Nepali-speaking areas is no longer repeated. To assuage Nepali sentiments, the Left Front Government took the initiative for a resolution to be adopted unanimously by the State Assembly urging the Centre to concede the linguistic demand. But that apparently has not satisfied the Gorkha League, though its influence in Darjeeling might be diminishing mainly because of inner-party dissensions. However, the level of veneration usually shown towards the King of Nepal by most Nepali speaking people in this district as well as in adjacent Sikkim is indeed significant

It is also necessary to remember that most States or Union Territories of the north-east region once formed part of Assam, and that at one stage, removing themselves from Assam's hegemony constituted their main political issue. The reason they cited then was that Assam sought to treat the tribal populations as second-class citizens in terms of development in particular. But a more important factor may have been the growing political aspirations of the educated and the elite, who wanted to manage their own affairs without tutelage or control from outside. This is a natural and common attitude of tribal pride which administrators often tend to mistake for hostility or worse, with unwelcome consequences. Like any other section of the population elsewhere in India, tribals of North-East India are resentful of the alleged attitude of administrators and others, drawn from non-tribals, that they are carrying the burden of civilising backward people.

Induction of outsiders into the administrations of the newly-formed States and Union Territories may largely have been unavoidable since not many local people were coming up to the desired standard as fast as required by the administration. This may also be justified to the extent that this was one way of fostering a sense of integration with the national mainstream. But somehow this may not have worked in the way it was meant to and the reasons may be attributed to both sides. Itanagar, Arunachal's temporary capital, for

example, has now a very limited population and commercial and other facilities. By law no outsider or non-tribal can possess a trade or commercial licence or can even get into Arunachal without a formal permit. Yet most Itanagar commercial establishments are presently run by outsiders. Their attitudes and practices may go to form the local tribals' overall attitude towards non-tribals.

Periodic transfer of permanent all-India service personnel is a universally accepted administrative principle, which is now applicable to both tribal and non-tribal cadre officers serving especially in tribal areas. But an argument can be made in favour of considering whether it will be possible, through a conscious policy, to allow tribal officers to serve in their respective areas for longer periods, if not throughout their career, with greater freedom than allowed normally and to make them accountable for rapid development of their respective communities; otherwise, their education and training are lost to their communities. There is also a danger in this suggestion. Placed under such circumstances, these officers may also allow themselves to get involved in tribal feuds or controversies, and soon lose the appearance of administrative impartiality.

There is a zonal council for Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram with headquarters in Shillong. Formed in 1972, the Council is to formulate a unified and coordinated regional plan, in addition to State plans, covering matters of common importance and interest. It is to watch the progress of implementation of the plan projects and expenditure thereon. It is also required to review from time to time measures taken by the constituting States for the maintenance of security and public order and recommend further measures in this direction.

But ever since he took over as Tripura Chief Minister, CPM leader Nripen Chakravorty has been repeating his plea that the Council needs to be re-structured for better effectiveness and coordination.

Apparently he is unhappy with the manner and scope of Council functioning and has expressed the desire to take up the issue with his counterparts from other States in the region for a serious discussion on how the re-structuring can take place. Meghalaya's All People Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) has come out in open support of Chakravorty's plea. And how the issue develops after the new governments have settled down in Assam, Arunachal and Meghalaya has to be watched. It has also to be seen how far Chakravorty is prompted by a genuine desire for the welfare and progress of the States which constitute the Council or whether he uses the issue against the Centre, as his party colleague, Jyoti Basu, in West Bengal is doing in regard to Centre-State relations.

Coming to individual States, Assam is the most populous and relatively more advanced politically and economically than the others in the region. Congress had enjoyed the monopoly of power there, which was challenged by the Janata Party during the Assembly elections. But in doing so the Janata Party entered into an electoral alliance with a tribal regional party in preference to the CPM, which had also offered such an understanding. Whatever the Janata Party thinking at the national level might have been on this specific issue, the local Assam unit spurned the CPM overture primarily out of a fear that, otherwise, the CPM, after its impressive victories in Tripura and West Bengal, would have been offered an opportunity which it did not have now to make inroads into Assam, the question of how many seats to be shared was not that important as it has been made out to be.

If the CPM's growth and spread has so far been extremely limited in Assam as well as in Meghalaya, it is not because of any lack of effort on its own side, but it is mainly due to the fact that in both the areas, the CPM continues to have a predominantly Bengali image and character; moreover, in Meghalaya it also faced the Catholic challenge. Such sentiments, not unique in Assam alone among the States,

probably result from historical and traditional causes, not the least significant among these perhaps are the Assamese own sense of inferiority and Bengali-speaking people's lack of adaptability and intransigence. Assam had also witnessed linguistic violence.

During the recent Assembly elections in Tripura, similar sentiments were sought to be exploited not only by the tribal youth front, another regional party which has emerged as the only Opposition in the new legislature, but also the Congress and the Janata. Yet, the CPM, if it is serious, should do some heart-searching and self-criticism about the emergence of a new regional party from among Tripura tribals who were once the party's secure base. One important reason has, of course, been that the tribals, who at the time of independence were predominant in population terms, have since been numerically swamped by Bengali migrants from former East Pakistan.

It is difficult to say how far this process in Tripura influenced tribal leaders' thoughts and actions in adjacent Meghalaya; no doubt it must have done so marginally. Also, the fact is that at least two Meghalaya regional parties — the Khasi-dominated All Party Hill Leaders' Conference and its break-away, Hill State People's Democratic Party — fought the last election primarily on the slogan that there should be a ban on any fresh influx of Bangladeshis and Nepalese; they wanted the present 80:20 ratio of tribals and non-tribals to be maintained. The Congress, led by former APHLC leader and Chief Minister, Captain Williamson Sangma, also had to repeat the same demand though in a different form. Capt Sangma's joining the Congress during the Emergency in 1976 broke the APHLC's monopoly of power in Meghalaya which, in the meantime, had travelled a long way though a district council set-up and Statehood under Assam's overall framework to full statehood. The APHLC undoubtedly fought the election with its back to the wall and for political survival and a defeat may set off yet unforeseen reactions not only in this party but

in HSPDP also and they may be forced to re-unite. The essentially middle-class leadership of both, having developed vested interest in the status quo, may put a brake on the growth of extremism. But that is for the future.

In Arunachal Pradesh, previously NEFA, there is yet no pronounced tribal vs non-tribal conflict; but the emergence of an Opposition in the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) might have brought the possibility of having one nearer. It has already raised its election battle cry against development planners who are not familiar with local conditions and problems as well as the Lt Governor, K.A.A. Raja, who has served the area for over two decades. The PPA's source of inspiration is not very clear, though some in the administration seem to have convinced themselves on some aspects of it. There is the danger, therefore, of someone taking up the challenge on a personal level, if that happens, Arunachal's political scene may take a dramatic and ominous turn. There are reports of Mizo and Naga infiltration, the latter particularly in an area which provides direct access to China. P.K. Thungon has displayed political realism and resilience by switching from the Congress to the Janata, because, as he himself says, his main interest is development.

Arunachal has over 50 big and small tribes, many more sub-tribes and clans. Tribal barriers are breaking down; but in any society this is bound to be a very slow process. Thungon's choice as Chief Minister in the first case, in preference to his erstwhile cabinet colleague and presently his political opponent, Tomo Riba might have been prompted by the consideration of the size of the tribal community to which they belonged. Thungon comes from a very small one. However, the presence of several thousand tribal people, trained in commando type defence tactics since 1962, continues to be a potent factor in relation to the entire situation and its future development.

Why Nagaland and Mizoram should be treated as belonging to an

altogether different category perhaps needs no elaboration. Rebel activities may appear to have subsided more in the former than in the latter. In Mizoram administrative personnel still do not venture out to areas which are not patrolled, in Nagaland the position in this respect may be many shades better. To a section of the second generation of Naga rebels, Phizo may still be a legend and to others his image might have become blurred already. Under such circumstances pacification has indeed been an extremely delicate and difficult task for the security forces. Settlement negotiations are said to be on and not suspended. In Nagaland, even a few hundred rebels, sitting across the border in Burma because their return from China has been barred by security forces, might have become indirect participants

On the other hand, the emergence of Bangladesh should have changed the Mizoram context significantly, though, perhaps, not permanently. In Nagaland the question now should be whether a settlement without involving Phizo is possible. In Mizoram, Laldenga's talks continue intermittently. But Laldenga might now be demanding his own price, which is Chief Ministership of Mizoram, while, in the meantime, a new and an hostile leadership has been emerging. Should it be possible to strike a deal with Laldenga, it might leave ambitious 'Brigadier' Shailo high and dry. Shailo's last thesis at a Shillong convention of all the regional parties of north-east India was that since the fragmentation of India is inevitable, they should get together to form a tribal sovereign State comprising also the Naga-inhabited parts of Burma.

In this entire region barring Arunachal, Christian missionaries have been conspicuous for long, and their social impact on the local tribal population is unmistakable. In a way they cannot be blamed for anything much now, because there was a time when missionaries were the only organized and sympathetic group to whom people could turn for assistance and solace. It will, therefore, be unfortunate if

their postures today appear to many as politically motivated. Tell-tale signs may be many and unmistakable, though missionaries themselves deny any such involvement

In Arunachal, Christian missionaries are not permitted to function as they have been doing along the foothills. Yet Mizo preachers have been detected in Arunachal and others from Nagaland are said to have converted several thousand tribals in Tirap district. Whether both are parts of the same drive is more than this correspondent can say. But there are people in authority who say they are so, and speak of wider and specific politico-religious objectives. This only adds to the complications of a highly sensitive region. Regional parties and their governments must have realised by now the benefits of remaining with the national mainstream and the federation in the best interests of all concerned. At the same time, their smallness as well as the smallness of States in this region and problems arising out of smallness may make them susceptible to external influences, not always in the national interest

Extension of national political parties to these areas may be of some help. But this should never again be attempted in the way it was done in 1976 by twisting the arm of the leadership of the regional parties and in the name of bringing them all into the national mainstream. Refreshingly, the Janata Party has so far avoided any conspicuous interference with regional parties in Meghalaya; one reason may be the APHLC's belief that its one-time closeness to some Janata leaders had cost them dearly during the Lok Sabha poll. In Arunachal, Thungon's decision to join the Janata Party was his own choice, however, the Janata Party may not have written off the PPA or at least some of its leaders altogether. But its adjustment with the tribal regional party in Assam will remain suspect, unless it is demonstrated that this association was not just a vote-catching device but a means to mollify and rationalise the other's sectarian demand for another tribal State to be carved out of Assam

Tamil regionalism

R. SRINIVASAN

REGIONAL parties have been persistent in Tamil Nadu from the 1920s. The DMK and the AIADMK should be seen as the latest manifestations of the Justice Party and the Dravida Kazagam. The latter, which was a lower class, lower caste populist movement thriving on some of the ideologies that the Justice Party had popularized, added a few more ingredients to the already potent tonic—a call for separation (mainly inspired by Muslim and Sikh demands), a violent anti-North sentiment and an anti-Hindu stance.

When the DMK came to power it had little in the nature of a definitive programme save that of not allowing Hindi to become the national language. It made facile promises and attempted to implement some of them. It was particularly good at making spectacular gestures but poor in economic performance. It hesitated in tampering with the rural social structure. Even the tragedy of the burning of 42 Harijans in East Tanjore, for instance, did not lead to any radical reform for it was not eager to antagonize the land-owning gentry. In the urban areas, it succeeded in bringing the popular weeklies to its side by aim twisting, by inducing strikes in newspapers, etc., and by acquiring control of the trade unions by politicizing them.

The DMK has all along thrived by playing upon the raw emotions of the Tamils. Over the years, in fact, it graduated to being a full fledged populist party with all that goes with extreme forms of popu-

lism. It created a pantheon of folk heroes like Ramaswami Naicker, Annadurai and M.G. Ramachandran who became objects of public adoration and worship. M.G. Ramachandran's charisma rivalled that of all the party leaders put together. His fan clubs institutionalized his charisma and provided for the undivided DMK a parallel structure for support mobilization. One of the most important factors in the popularity of the party has indeed been its film star Treasurer.

All populist movements depend on the manipulation of symbols and so does the DMK. In its case, however, the heavily cultural character of the Dravidian movement has provided it with a rich repertoire of primordially charged symbols which it has manipulated effectively through drama troupes, feature films and documentaries and through newspapers and periodicals. One consequence of this has been that the DMK was not able to develop its early promise of becoming a radical party. Perhaps, had Annadurai not died as early as he did, the DMK programme would have acquired a significant socio-economic content, and the government at least some record of purposive social action. Annadurai's successor, Karunanidhi, took the conventional route to political success. He supplemented the manipulation of cultural symbols with patronage.

Like Chief Ministers elsewhere, he sought to strengthen his position by

rewarding important dissenting partymen with ministerships while opening avenues to money making for his supporters by institutionalising corruption. The government's performance became a byword for corrupt practices. The State became a whispering gallery where stories of corruption of members of the party at all levels freely echoed and re-echoed, producing either a sense of helpless cynicism or impotent indignation in the public.

The Chief Minister himself in April 1975, declared that he would be ready to face any enquiry instituted by the Centre or by any member of the Opposition. The Tamil Nadu government appointed a one man Commission (a Judge of the Madras High Court) to enquire into the charge of the Opposition against the Public Works Minister, P.U Shanmugam, for his involvement in the rice export scandal of 1971. This came out because of the findings of the Estimates Committee. The same year saw the Chief Minister dropping Dharmalingam, his Minister of Revenue and later Agriculture, because of charges of corruption against him.

During the Emergency, a special Judge in Madras charged Karunanidhi under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Act, for 'alleged conspiracy, cheating, acceptance of illegal gratification and using forged documents as genuine in the wheat deal case.' This related to the alleged acceptance in 1974-75 of 45 lakhs of rupees to favour a party to import wheat from the Punjab and sell it in the open market. The Chief Minister was also charged with substituting letters and passing off an unofficial letter as genuine in official files, and ante-dating the seal.

The findings of the Sarkaria Commission later established the fact that a wide net-work of corruption existed in the government in which the Chief Minister and the Agricultural Minister were involved. Several others, too, were implicated. The Commission found that the family members of the Agricultural Minister, Dharmalingam, became very prosperous after he took over

as Minister. Serious irregularities were committed in the award of contracts for aerial spraying in which both Karunanidhi and Dharmalingam were entangled. Nedunchezian was involved in favouring a publication firm with which Dharmalingam was associated. Favouritism was indulged in by S. Madhavan in granting loans. Four ministers were implicated in showing undue favour to the lessee of the New Globe Theatre in Madras. A publishing house, blacklisted by the government, was favoured by the Chief Minister. The then Minister for Co-operation released loans with a speed that was astonishing and it was charged that definite favouritism was indulged in. While the Indian public has been used to corruption and favouritism of some sort, the scale on which it was indulged in by the rank and file of the DMK government and the party was indeed unprecedented.

Karunanidhi tried to cover the fact of corruption through populist postures and manipulation of cultural symbols. Earlier in his regime he tried to give a veneer of social reformism and welfare to the activities of his administration through a slum clearance programme, anticipating by years what was to happen later in Delhi during the Emergency. Later on, when M G R launched a campaign against his corrupt administration and caused a split in the party, Karunanidhi tried to promote an anti-Keralite feeling in the State (for M G R comes from Kerala) by encouraging assaults on the Keralites by DMK enthusiasts. The DMK administration itself jumped into the game when following the expulsion by the authorities of the American hospital at Vellore of 15 members of the staff who happened to be Tamils, the hospital water and electric supplies were cut off, the internationally known neuro-surgeon, Dr K V Mathai was arrested and a 70 day strike was organised by the hospital workers union.

And when during the Emergency Karunanidhi felt cornered from all sides (M G R and his dissidence on the one hand and the Sarkaria Commission and Mrs Gandhi on the other) he began playing on

Tamil fears of the north. At the fifth conference of the DMK held at Coimbatore, the threat was held out that if the demand for more State autonomy was not accepted by the Centre the party would be compelled to revert to its earlier demand for a separate State. The DMK leaders in their public speeches made comparisons with the events in Bangla Desh and made references to the fate of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman.

All this was supplemented by Karunanidhi in true populist style by other measures to browbeat his opponents in politics and the bureaucracy. MISA was allegedly used against his political opponents and conscientious and unbending officials were forcibly retired. Phones of income tax officials posted in Madras and enquiring into tax arrears of DMK members were tapped and attempts were made to penetrate the administration politically at all levels.

Finally, when the end of the DMK administration came in 1976, he tried to exploit the fact that his government's dismissal was essentially due to its not supporting Mrs Gandhi's Emergency by allowing free circulation of proscribed material. While he probably had a point there, in the elections of March and then June 1977, voters were not willing to overlook for that reason his other failings and weaknesses and the dismal record of his government.

In fact, the erosion of support for the DMK started soon after M G R left the party to form the Anna DMK. This fact was demonstrated most effectively as early as 1973 when the DMK candidate was trounced badly by the ADMK candidate in the bye-election that year for the Dindugal Lok Sabha seat. The continuing decline of the DMK also showed itself in the outcome of the March 1977 elections to Parliament as it did indeed in the elections to the Assembly in June last when the DMK could gain only 48 seats against the 130 bagged by the AIADMK.

While the people of Tamil Nadu swept aside the DMK in June 1977, they turned not to one of the nation-

nal parties but to another variant of the DMK, exhibiting the continuing strength of the regional sentiment. If anything, the elections to the State Assembly in 1977 proved that the people of the State have in no way abandoned their faith in the ideology of the DMK. In rejecting the DMK they were only rejecting self-aggrandisement, corruption and the caprice of the DMK leaders and the government but no more. For, after all, 55% of the votes were polled by the DMK and the AIADMK together, while the Congress and the Janata together got only 34% of the votes. Also, while 41% of the Congress candidates and 51% of the Janata candidates lost their deposits, one per cent of the AIADMK candidates and 20% of the DMK candidates did so. The support base of the DMK and the AIADMK, therefore, seems to be stable and, if anything, it seems to have grown over the years.

Unlike Karunanidhi's team which had its name tarnished by unsavoury accounts of corruption, of intimidation, favouritism and revolts of local strong men of the Party, the AIADMK led by M G R has a fairly burnished image. For the deprived sections of the Tamil people, M G R is almost a religious figure. The poor worship him and would pawn anything to watch his movies. Women from the slums as well as men from the working class have been his devout followers. One important reason for this appeal is clearly his romantic idealistic image, effectively conveyed through the films. This is strengthened by the innumerable acts of charity, good deeds and help of the film hero in real life. This is wholly in keeping with the Tamil tradition which has always been to applaud and cherish those who are generous with their wealth. The votes cast for the AIADMK are definitely for the film star rather than for the party.

Manifestoes cannot be taken seriously as expressions of what a government in power will actually do but they do express things that concern the public. The Manifesto of the AIADMK has promised good government, simple living by the ministers, and help to poor litigants, along with the promise to keep the

party away from the administration. It promises to improve the lot of the common man. But there also is the inevitable talk of 'effective federalism' and of English continuing as the official language.

Since even a year has yet to pass after the formation of the M G R ministry, one ought to wait before one passes any judgement on its record. It has been successful in calling off strikes by transport workers and by the members of a government hospital. Presumably, serious attempts are being made to keep the party away from the administration, and if the Chief Minister succeeds in this he would have earned the gratitude of the people. The usual Centre-baiting will of course be continued and other symbolic acts, such as the changing of names of towns, pursued earlier will continue.

The DMK Party in opposition has charged that the M G R government has done nothing to fulfil the election promises such as the promise to open fair price shops (16,000 promised). On the other hand, it is alleged that the government has imposed 'mini MISA' and has imprisoned between twenty-five to thirty-thousand people. The supporters of the Ministry, however, argue that thanks to MISA, a great deal of planned violence was prevented on the occasion of the visit of Mrs Gandhi to Tamil Nadu. The violent happenings that took place on that occasion indicated that there perhaps was careful planning on the part of the demonstrators.

The DMK has been doing its bit to discredit the Ministry by attempting to lead a farmers' protest, which, however, was prevented by the government from gathering strength. Attacks on the office bearers of the AIADMK by the DMK have been reported. Inter-caste party violence seems to have become a part of Tamil Nadu politics.

Some influential members who had walked out of the DMK and formed a Peoples' DMK now have joined the AIADMK. There seems to be a general movement towards the AIADMK. But one cannot draw any definite conclusion from

this development, for Tamil political loyalties can be volatile and people seem to move from one party to another and not infrequently. However, there have been no significant migrations from the AIADMK to the DMK.

In other States, the regional units of the Congress Party have managed to successfully voice the aspirations of the region as well as provide a national dimension to their activities and policies. The Congress Party in Tamil Nadu could not do this effectively mainly because the aspirations of the region were being pressed consistently and stridently by the DMK. The decision taken by Mrs Gandhi not to set up candidates in the Assembly elections in 1971 was for the Congress Party, one of the most fatal of decisions. For, by this she put the Congress clock back by at least two to three decades. The Congress (O) which on its own contested the Assembly elections in 1971 got 35.1% of the votes which should be considered as a creditable record, considering the odds against which it was fighting. The Congress still had some measure of popularity and the leadership of Kamraj was acceptable to the different constituents of the party.

What weakened the Congress here was the division, and a divided Congress could never be a match for the DMK. Retired statesmen like T T K. advocated a reunion of the two sections. While much depended upon Kamraj, his continuous vacillation in this matter further strengthened the DMK and its shadow, the AIADMK. Ideologically, it will be impossible for any national party in this region to steal the DMK/AIADMK thunder. A national party by its very nature will be precluded from beating the cultural drum. For, this would question the very foundation of any party that has any nationalist aspirations. Kamraj alone could successfully weld together the regional and the national elements in Tamil politics.

With Kamraj gone, the only other figure in a position to do so was Mrs Gandhi. She had the populist style and the charisma to effectively stand the challenge of both Karuna-

nidhi and M.G.R. Therefore, the sections of the Congress leadership which wanted the party to hitch itself to Mrs. Gandhi's star were acting realistically. Not surprisingly, Ramachandran, who succeeded Kamraj as the leader of the party, found it impossible to contain the factions and the divisions within.

With a small section of the Congress veering to the Janata and a larger and more ambitious and active section to Mrs. Gandhi, a situation has arisen in Tamil Nadu politics which is similar to the one in 1969. We have two powerful regional parties matched by two national parties which compared to the DMK and the AIADMK have, as of now, a weak electoral base. The electoral gains of the two parties of the region have been precisely at the cost of the Congress and every election has seen the gradual erosion of the Congress vote.

The election of 1967 which handed the State to the DMK on a platter was the very one that saw the Congress over the entire country recede to a very low ebb. But the electoral revival of the party under Mrs. Gandhi did not flush out the DMK in Tamil Nadu. During the intervening years, the party has entrenched itself most strongly in all key positions. However well established the Janata Party be in the Centre, the DMK will still continue to be a party of great appeal to the people of Tamil Nadu. The politics of cultural chauvinism, if anything, has gathered strength and new identities are being established. The demand of the West Bengal Government for a reconsideration of the constitutional division of powers between the Centre and the States will find strong support in Tamil Nadu.

It is very doubtful if the activists of the DMK/AIADMK will seek to whip up public sentiment on the issue of secession which they did in 1976. Meanwhile, a substantial segment of the Tamil public has come of voting age and it knows of no party but the DMK/AIADMK, while there is no Kamraj on the scene. It will take a very long time for another Kamraj to emerge—for after all it took Kamraj nearly three

decades of dedicated work to build up his image and there is none in the national party on whom his mantle can fall. All this will inevitably make for the Tamil public to be under the continued spell of regional appeals.

The only definite thing that can be said about the developments in Tamil Nadu is that the appeals of regionalism will continue for a long time to come. It must be remembered that regional sentiments have been promoted for nearly half a century and the mass media are a very strong agency for popularizing this appeal. Some of the most influential people have indirectly contributed to the popularity of the regional cause while the case against regionalism has not even been attempted. The people who could convincingly highlight the limitations of regionalism from a long term perspective have preferred to ignore the challenge by seeking to cultivate other gardens. The intelligent Tamil till now has not even been exposed to the possibility of there being a contrary view.

The Justice Party was essentially a party of interests, while it was anti-Brahmin, it still operated in terms of balancing of interests and in bargaining, since there was more than one linguistic group which had to be carried along. The unilingual State of Madras, on the other hand, helped in ushering in a style of mass mobilization, through cultural-chauvinistic appeals, which would not have worked earlier. Since this style enabled those who would have been satisfied earlier with minor positions in society to reach the topmost rungs of the social and political ladder, it received tremendous validation thereby becoming the dominant style in the politics of Tamil Nadu.

Elsewhere, both the newly enfranchised sections of society and the established dominant castes managed to find positions within the existing political party, the Indian National Congress. It was only in Tamil Nadu that this accommodation did not occur or, at least, not on the scale it did in other States. One reason for this was the failure of the local Congress leadership to

consolidate its position within the State the way Kamraj had done earlier. Once Kamraj started devoting more time to national party affairs, the Congress Party in Tamil Nadu gradually lost touch with the masses. The educated youth being turned out by the school system was for all practical purposes only functionally literate. Exposed to films, through which highly slanted, simplistic, and romantic messages were being conveyed, and fed on a periodical literature that had no pretensions towards furthering rational faculties, the youth was prepared to lap up the raucous slogans of the DMK.

The populist appeal of the two parties immediately becomes apparent once one looks at the themes they emphasise. Both share a xenophobia, that of the North and of Hindi, both talk of conspiracy by industrial interests of the North and of drive for dominion of the aryanized Brahmins. The appeal is to primordial loyalties, reinforced by mythological and literary exercises. Though urban, the DMK and the AIADMK share essentially all the characteristics of parties in mass societies. The appeal of both Anna and Karunanidhi as well as of M.G.R. is *oral* (speech making) and *visual* (movies). The political choice available to the citizen is overtly emotional and the rational content of politics is at the minimum. There is no ideology expressive of any economic programmes. There is a disarming ignorance of economic problems in the literature of the DMK as there is in the rank of its activists and its supporters. Centre-baiting has remained one of the constant themes of the DMK. It tends to explain away its bleak record in terms of neglect by the Centre. The manner of appointment of the Rajamannar Commission, its procedure, its highly slanted questionnaire, the select sampling of views, all from the beginning prejudged its findings.

The most serious charge against the DMK has been that it has, like the Justice Party, remained the party of upper castes. Karunanidhi's Harijan minister, Dr. Satyavani Muthu, who resigned in

1974 had stressed time and again this fact. In the General Council of the party, 55 % of the leading members are from the higher castes (though non-Brahmin). At the local levels, 43% of the leadership comes from the backward but not the scheduled castes. It is now felt that the Congress government at least represented the scheduled castes adequately. Very much as in Maharashtra, in Tamil Nadu too, the scheduled castes regard themselves as being continually oppressed and they have arisen to assert their rights and their just demands.

The DMK, like all regional parties, suffers and will continue to experience one basic difficulty and this is regarding its dissenting members and the difficult trouble makers. In a national organization there is always a large field, and an inconvenient member at the local level can be sent to the Centre, or to head some mission or to occupy a dignified post, all away from the local scene of disturbance.

With the regional party it is otherwise. A seat in either house of Parliament can be but a poor compensation for a DMK aspirant who has become too troublesome for the Chief Minister or for the party leader. This results in intra-party differences turning into vendettas or feuds. Every step is watched and every move is matched by a counter move and the happenings very much illustrate the principles of the *Arthashastra*. Goldwin Smith, the Victorian historian, once put the matter pithily: the smaller the pit, the fiercer the rats. The intensity that politics gains here is not conducive to the development of a civic polity.

This spatial constraint also renders it difficult for the DMK to resort to bargaining and compromise. If you are a member of an all-India organization, there can be always a sense of perspective. One's immediate loss can be compensated later. Give and take which comes so easily to a national party ultimately strengthens democratic traditions. With the DMK it is a zero-sum situation. Either one gains everything or loses everything.

Unlike the traditional Congress style of mobilization which used institutions, buffers and general councils, mediating between the citizen and the party, the DMK style is to leap over all institutions and to directly contact the masses. Its lack of inner-party democracy, the continuance of the leadership at centrally strategic positions, the sedulous pursuit of image building and of intimidation of people have led to all the powers to be concentrated in the person of the President. Periodical revolts have been common and in this all differences are personal.

The existence of the AIADMK provides another home for these dissenters. But, in spite of these dissenters, the practices developed by the leadership have dangerous implications for democratic functioning. For, there is more of emotional manipulation than of system functional mobilization. Whether one looks at it from the point of view of political mobilization or of the promotion of high culture, or economic performance, the DMK has nothing hopeful to offer.

A strident commitment to Tamil culture has all along been central to the very survival of the DMK. While at the so-called cultural level (which is only a euphemism for tribalism) the party has been successful, it has found its greatest obstacle in the task of nation-building. Regionalism in India has been till recently successfully contained by the Congress, a national party, and used both for mobilization as well as for nation-building. Regional demands and splinter groups have been absorbed successfully in the national mainstream. If the Telengana agitation which lasted for two and more long agonizing years could be successfully contained, there is no reason why regional parties should not find a place for themselves within the dominant national parties. But for this to happen a national party or parties must exist and be more than a sum of their parts which the Congress once was and the Janata is yet to become.

Andhra: social polarisation

B A. V. SHARMA and M MADHUSUDHAN REDDY

EVER since its formation in November 1956, Andhra Pradesh has been one of the three strongholds of the Congress in the South, the other two being Karnataka and Maharashtra. The Congress grip over Maharashtra is perhaps loosening, but Andhra, like Karnataka, remains firmly in the Congress column. No political formation, be it a national party or regional, has so far had more than a temporary salience in the politics of this State. From the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, led in Andhra by Prakasam, to Professor Ranga's Krishikar Lok Party and its later reincarnation, the Swatantra, to the Praja Socialist Party and its various offshoots, all gained some prominence at various times only to disappear, soon after

their initial appearance, from the Andhra scene.

The communists have been the only elements in Andhra politics to survive all these years and retain an autonomous support base of their own. But even in their case, with the exception of a relatively impressive electoral performance once, the story has been one of stagnation rather than expansion. When the number of candidates set up by a party keep varying markedly from election to election, as is true in the case of the communists in Andhra, its share of votes is not a good indicator of its strength, but seats won are. Keeping this in mind, the high-water mark of communist strength was the election of 1962 in

which the undivided party, fielding 136 candidates, polled 19.53 per cent of the votes and won 51 Assembly seats. But, thereafter, the CPI and CPM together have not been able to come anywhere close to the number of seats they had won in 1962. In the last two Assembly elections of 1972 and 1978 their seats were 8 and 14 respectively.

In Andhra Pradesh, the challenge to the Congress Party has come from within. Every major agitation in Andhra Pradesh since 1956, from the struggle for Osmania University's autonomy to the agitation for the location of a steel plant at Visakhapatnam, to the Telangana (1965) and the Andhra (1973) agitations, was a clear manifestation of Congress factionalism. Each one of them was led overtly or covertly by one group of Congressmen against another.

The Telangana agitation which lasted for two years was by far the most important and intense, leading to the formation of a separate political organisation called the Telangana Praja Samithi (TPS). Fighting the 1971 mid-term Lok Sabha elections on the issue of a separate Telangana State, the TPS won 11 out of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the Telangana region. Although it emerged as a powerful party in that region, this fact did not result in the development of a strong non-Congress opposition in the State.

Though the Telangana Praja Samithi had elements from different parties within its fold, the leadership was in the hands of Congressmen opposed to Brahmananda Reddy. Nor did the fact of TPS being a separate political organisation which opposed the Congress candidates in the election, come in the way of TPS leaders, who continued to give their allegiance to Mrs Gandhi at the national level. When Brahmananda Reddy stepped down as the Chief Minister the TPS merged with the Congress, allowing the latter once again to be supreme and without a credible challenge to its entrenched position in the State.

The dominance of the Congress Party has been a fact of life for two

decades, now in Andhra Pradesh. In this period, its pre-eminent position was built around the support of the landed gentry. The party's leadership gradually shifted in the late fifties and early sixties from the urban centres to the rural periphery, from the educated middle class in the cities to the rural elite, from the higher urban based castes to middle peasant castes.

While the Congress leadership in the Andhra area during the freedom movement came essentially from the Brahmins, it gradually shifted to the dominant agricultural castes of Reddys, Kammas and Velmas. The first Chief Ministers of both Andhra State formed in 1953 and Hyderabad were Brahmins. The others who followed came, with two exceptions, from the dominant peasant castes. One of the two exceptions was D. Sanjeeviah, a Harijan, who became the Chief Minister for two years when the two powerful factions at the time in the Congress could not agree upon a candidate for the post. The other was P.V. Narasimha Rao, a Brahmin, who was placed in the office as a 'nominated Chief Minister' by Mrs Gandhi.

The composition of the Cabinet has reflected the same phenomenon. The Reddys, the Velmas and the Kammas held between them 45 to 58 per cent of the seats in the Cabinet, with the Reddys being the single largest group (28 to 38 per cent) till 1971. During the same period the representation of the backward classes and scheduled castes in the Cabinet remained below 25 per cent.

Panchayat Raj introduced in 1959, was used for consolidating the hold of the dominant castes on State politics. The zilla parishads, panchayat samithis, village panchayats and cooperatives were used as instruments of political control and support mobilisation by the Chief Ministers, and the members of the dominant castes. In the 1970 elections to the Panchayat Raj bodies, Reddy candidates were elected as Chairmen in 15 out of 21 zilla parishads. And out of 324 samithi presidents elected then,

nearly half belonged to the same caste.

Thus, in Andhra, as perhaps elsewhere, the landed castes and particularly the Reddy rural gentry constituted the back-bone of the Congress Party. The communist rebellion in Telangana, and, later, a communist bid to form the ministry soon after Andhra State was formed in 1953, frightened the dominant castes enough to make them extend massive support to the Congress and strengthen it in the process. The Congress Party in turn depended on them to mobilize the voters during elections. Both the national and the State leadership of the party tried to reach the voters not directly but, through local influentials belonging to the dominant castes. This arrangement worked extremely well given the social status and economic power of the dominant castes and the low political consciousness of the other castes.

After the 1969 split began the attempt to restructure the support base of the Congress Party. The upper middle class, landlord and peasant caste support-structure of the party was considered to be a hindrance to bringing about socio-economic changes, which the new Congress, in a stridently radical mood, was now talking about. With P.V. Narasimha Rao as the Chief Minister, changes started. Though a Brahmin, but not from a landed caste, Narasimha Rao initiated the policy of giving greater representation to the backward classes and weaker sections in the legislature and the Council of Ministers.

In the 1972 Assembly elections, large numbers of tickets were given to backward classes and minorities. The 26 member ministry formed under his Chief Ministership after the elections had the largest number of persons belonging to the weaker sections (4 Harijans, 6 from the backward classes, 1 Sirjan, 2 from the minorities. Total 13). The upper castes had for the first time a markedly lower representation with only 4 Reddys, 2 Kammas and 3 Brahmins (Total 9). Along with this came other developments. one

land legislation, far more radical than any undertaken earlier was passed, and two, moves to supersede the Panchayati Raj institutions were mooted. The argument was that, dominated by the landed castes, these institutions were proving to be an obstacle to the implementation of the radical policies of the Congress.

Although Narasimha Rao's position and actions were consistent with the openly declared policies of the Congress, what he was doing reflected to no small extent a desire to make his position in Andhra politics a little more secure. Catalyzed into office by Mrs Gandhi and not of the dominant castes, he knew he was at the mercy of the Reddys, the Kammas and the Velmas whose allegiances were already with Brahmananda Reddy. But he also knew that even otherwise they would not prefer him to one of their own class. Narasimha Rao, therefore, needed to loosen their grip on political affairs and to create an autonomous support base of his own. The latter involved forging a coalition of the backward classes, the Harijans and the minorities.

His attempts to mobilise these groups set in motion the process of polarisation of Andhra politics along class/caste lines. He succeeded to a substantial extent in undercutting the hold of the landed gentry on the Harijan and backward class voters and establishing direct links with them. But in doing this he inevitably alienated the still powerful dominant castes. Their response was to use the regional Andhra sentiment, which developed in reaction to the concessions given to the TPS, to mount an agitation to get rid of him in 1973.

His successor, Vengal Rao, a Kamma, eased up a bit on the land reforms which had upset the landed interests the most. But with no base of his own like Narasimha Rao, and equally dependent for continuance in office on the dominant caste combination in the State Congress, controlled largely by Brahmananda Reddy, he continued to pursue some of the measures his predecessor had initiated to ameliorate the conditions of the weaker

sections of the people. The Emergency followed by the announcement of the 20 point programme gave him a chance which Narasimha Rao did not have, of speeding up this process without the fear of reprisal from the landed interests.

Neither Narasimha Rao nor Vengal Rao were quite the radicals their actions would suggest, they were essentially politicians whose personal interest just happened to coincide with the interests of the poor, the deprived and the under privileged segments of the public.

It was after a relatively long period of populist measures and persistent efforts by these two Chief Ministers to establish links with the non-elite groups, by-passing the local notables, that the sixth general elections to the Lok Sabha were announced. Initially, there seemed to be no doubt whatever that the elections would be just a walk through the garden for the Congress. The position, however, changed with the formation of the Janata Party at the national level. Those unhappy with the radical changes attempted by Vengal Rao, and before him Narasimha Rao, gravitated towards the the Janata Party. With no other viable opposition party in existence in the State the Janata, given its immense popularity in the North, looked a good instrument to use against the Congress.

The Janata, with none of the parties constituting it ever having been strong in Andhra, did not appear initially as a credible opposition. An organisation of sorts was hastily put together with some SSP and RSS workers, operating though mainly in the urban areas. But soon there was a spontaneous upsurge of public support for it, encouraging the party to believe that it would win 20 to 25 of the 41 parliamentary seats in the State.

This support came basically from three sectors of the public and for altogether different reasons. One was the educated urban middle class sector, concerned with basic issues, pithily summed up in the question 'Slavery or Democracy?' The second was the group of agri-

culturists who were irked by land reforms and particularly the corruption which accompanied its implementation. They were equally annoyed at the abolition of bonded labour and the effort made by government machinery to inform the weaker sections of this step and to make agricultural labour and Harijans aware of their new status and the right to a reasonable wage for their work.

Though the bulk of the prosperous agriculturists drawn from different peasant castes were attracted towards the Janata, its support came overwhelmingly from the Reddy community. There was an important reason for the landed gentry particularly the Reddy community going to the Janata. Apart from the factors mentioned above, which irked all the elements of the landed gentry, the Reddy community had additional political and emotional reasons to be unhappy with the Congress.

Reddys as a dominant peasant caste had occupied a commanding position in State politics since the formation of Andhra Pradesh. But modernisation, increasing education and spreading benefits of commercialisation was adding to the strength and demands of other castes. In the new coalition of political forces referred to above, various non-Reddy dominant castes like Kamma, Velma and the Kappus were given more prominence than before, while inadequate representation was given particularly to the Reddys of Andhra and Rayalaseema regions in the Vengal Rao Ministry. On top of this, Vengal Rao carried through the supercession of Panchayati Raj institutions (mooted earlier by Narasimha Rao) most of which the Reddys controlled and used effectively to keep power in their hands.

All these factors contributed to the switch over of support of the landed gentry from the Congress to the Janata. In Rayalaseema in particular, the overwhelming part of the rural gentry went over to the Janata. In other regions its support was split between the two parties, though even in these areas the more prosperous among them

backed the Janata in overwhelming numbers

The third group which flocked to the Janata was that of the disgruntled political workers. It was a large group consisting of pre-independent Congress workers who could not adjust to the new type of politics.

The Congress, in spite of its enormous resources and power, faced many difficulties with its traditional support-base among the peasant communities badly eroded. Deprived of this support, the entire environment appeared so unsympathetic that many a Congress leader was found doubting his party's ability to win on this occasion. Most believed that the suspension of the Panchayat Raj bodies had reduced the influence of the Congress workers at the grass-roots level. Ultimately, the situation was such that in many cases Congress leaders were deserted by their followers. On the other hand, there seemed to be a high degree of cohesion in the Janata organisation since the candidate, the cadre and supporters were all drawn from the same strata. In fact in many places it looked as though Congress machinery was working for the Janata.

It was in this situation that the two parties evolved their poll strategies. While Janata made full use of issues like Emergency, authoritarianism, personality cult, dynasticism, rule of law etc., the Congress harped on its economic programme, stability vs anarchy and the 20-point programme. The three pillars of Congress strength seemed to be the weaker sections, money and Mrs Gandhi. The Chief Minister said that it was a war between 'a mud-house and a concrete bungalow'. Congressmen campaigning among the weaker sections stressed the fact that the Janata was a party of the rich, of the Reddys, or of the dominant castes and the landed gentry depending on the circumstances. Ultimately the trump card for Congress was of course Mrs Gandhi. She was projected as the saviour of the poor.

Eventually, when the results came,

exception to the general trend of the voting pattern in the country. While the Janata Party registered a massive victory in the North, it failed to make any impact on the southern States — particularly in Andhra Pradesh. Out of the 42 parliamentary seats, Janata could secure only one where the candidate managed to scrape through with a narrow margin of 30,000 votes.

Many arguments were put forward to explain the performance of the Congress. While Janata circles attributed it to the unscrupulous use of administrative machinery, massive use of money to corrupt the poor voters, poll commentators and independent observers attributed it to the absence of the rigors of Emergency and the so called communication gap, which left the Andhra people unaware of the events in the North.

Most of these explanations offered above provide some useful insights, but none of them offers an adequate explanation for the behaviour of the voters in this election. One must look for a fuller and more satisfactory explanation elsewhere. Our hypothesis is that the vote for the Congress was a positive response on the part of the poor to a number of measures and policies pursued by the government, engendering a new confidence in them for the first time.

The Andhra Pradesh Land-ceiling Act of 1972, which contains certain radical provisions is a case in point. Though the act was not faithfully implemented, or satisfied the basic grievance of the landless poor, the discomfiture it caused to the land-owning class, making them run from pillar to post, gladdened the hearts of the landless. In many areas the schemes under the S F D A (Small Farmers Development Agency), involving the distribution of milch cattle, pump sets etc., carried the benefits directly to the poor. Though it is doubtful if these measures economically benefited the poor very much, the very sight, for instance, of two buffaloes in front of his house, had a tremendous psychological impact on a Harijan or a

The action taken by the government in giving effect to the abolition of bonded labour and the propaganda about it created such a climate, that it deterred the landed gentry and money-lenders from proceeding with the recovery of outstanding loans. In conjunction with this, liberal granting of loans through the Grameena Banks in areas covered by them and through commercial banks in other areas mitigated, to some extent, the side effects of the drying up of traditional channels of credit. Another factor, which cannot be attributed directly to the minimum wage policy for rural labour but to the more favourable seasonal conditions, was the rise in the farm yields which in turn led to wage increases by almost 100% from 1975 onwards.

In giving effect to the programmes under the 20-point programme the bureaucracy played an active role. In many areas the District Collectors, Revenue Divisional Officers and Tahsildars were found visiting villages regularly using the agricultural workers to demand the minimum wages, and encouraging them to bring to the notice of officials instances of 'bonded labour'. Such cases when brought to their notice were often dealt with on the spot by officials — an experience which the poor were never accustomed to in the past. The cumulative effect of all these measures was to bring about a change in the psychology of the rural voter. But more important, by freeing them from their obligations to the land-owning class and the rural money-lender it enabled the voters belonging to the weaker sections to transfer their loyalty to the government led by the Congress.

The situation in cities and the smaller towns did not radically differ from that in the rural areas. The beneficial measures towards the urban poor in the form of house sites, liberalised loans to various weaker sections of the urban society had the same effect on them. The Muslims, as usual, were with the Congress, notwithstanding the visit to Hyderabad by the Shahi Imam.

When in these circumstances the

flocked to the Janata, that party acquired the odium of being a party of the rich. The March 1977 elections was, therefore, 'only a reflection of the cleavage between the haves and have-nots that had emerged much before the elections

The third factor, Mrs Gandhi's image, was steadily built up over the years. Her ability to topple even the mightiest of leaders, Chief Ministers belonging to dominant castes, was one element in this build-up. The other was the attribution of everything done by the State Government — even things which were expected of a government in the normal process — to her dynamic leadership. The ministers, the officials and other public functionaries who were involved in the implementation of various programmes never failed to stress that they were doing all this at the behest of Mrs Gandhi, and that these things would not have been done but for her. No wonder she came to be regarded as the champion of the poor, the bulk of whom believed the Janata Party to be a conspiracy of the rich to dislodge her from power, to vote for the Congress then was to support her in this fight

In the February Assembly elections, if the Congress(I) romped home to power with a comfortable majority, the decisive single factor responsible for this phenomenon was Mrs. Gandhi's image. Unlike Karnataka where Urs had some reason to claim at least part of the credit for the landslide victory of the Congress(I), the party's performance in Andhra Pradesh owes everything to her. Prior to her visit to the State for the election campaign the Congress(I) had a low profile. It neither had an organisational base nor was it in power. Nearly 80% of its candidates were political novices lacking both image and experience to fight elections.

So far as Andhra Pradesh was concerned a majority of the M.L.A.s remained with the Reddy-Chavan Congress. The Congress(I) was able to win over to its side only some M.L.A.s and ministers belonging to the backward classes.

Actually, only a majority of the supporters of P.V. Narasimha Rao, former C.M. and the followers of M. Chenna Reddy opted to go with Mrs Gandhi. At the organisational level also the Congress(I) was not able to make any significant gains, thus remaining a minority faction of the undivided Congress in the State.

The Indian National Congress on the other hand even after the split, inherited the well organised and well oiled organisational machinery intact. Even after the defection of nearly 80 to 90 M.L.A.s to the Janata and the Congress(I) the official Congress was able to retain the loyalty of a majority of M.L.A.s and thus remained in power. However, the Congress organisation was badly shaken down to the grass-roots level.

For the other major contender for power, the Janata Party, the main advantage (or one might say, disadvantage) was that of being the ruling party at the Centre. Its sweeping victory in the north during the last Lok Sabha elections as anticipated had its impact on politics in Andhra. Those expecting a percolation of Janata's influence, along with the fence sitters, opportunists and those guilty of misdemeanours, jumped on to the Janata bandwagon contributing to the swelling of its ranks, much to the dislike of its original components.

But, notwithstanding the general political developments in the country which created a favourable climate for it, the Janata was not able to do much to improve its situation in the State. It never really succeeded in expanding the support structure it had acquired in March 1978. The two communist parties, with not more than 10% electoral support, entered the poll as junior partners.

Once again the results of the poll disproved the predictions of the poll analysts. Most of the newspapers, local as well as national, predicted till the last that the Indian National Congress would emerge as the single largest party with nearly 140 seats out of a total of 294, followed by

Janata and Congress (I). The statement of the present Chief Minister, Dr M. Chenna Reddy, while launching the election campaign of his party that the real fight was between Congress(I) and Janata and not between the Indian National Congress and Janata was not taken seriously by many. In the event, the Congress (I) won 175 seats (39.19%), Janata 59 seats (28%), the Indian National Congress only 30 seats (17.74%), the CPM 8 and the CPI 6 with the rest going to independents, Majlis, CPM (L).

The Congress (I) did not manage to get a two-thirds majority which the undivided Congress had in the previous legislatures. But this position may well change soon with a majority of the 30 MLAs elected on the Indian National Congress ticket opting for the Congress (I) as their colleagues in Parliament have already done. But what about the Janata Party? Will it disappear the way all other opposition parties in Andhra have gone? The answer to the latter is perhaps, yes. For, with the exception of the small group of former socialists and the RSS/Jana Sangh elements, the Janata in Andhra is essentially made up of ex-Congressmen of very recent vintage. Attractions of power are overwhelming for most politicians and there is no reason to expect that this is not true of the ex-Congressmen in the Janata.

However, there still is the problem of a conflict between their interests as members of the landed castes and the policies pursued in the last few years by the Congress. Should the Congress show added vigour in its pursuit of radical social change, the former Congressmen now in Janata may prefer to stay where they are. But should the Congress be willing to accommodate their interests the odds will be heavily in favour of their going back to it. This is most likely to happen, because notwithstanding what Messrs Narasimha Rao and Vengal Rao did, (and what Mrs Gandhi keeps saying she will do for the poor) Congress (I) is not a radical party. What it represents is populism of the Peronist variety, which rarely has any difficulty in pleading for the poor while always serving the rich.

Books

SUB-REGIONALISM IN INDIA by M. Kistaiah
Book Links Corporation, Hyderabad

There being apparently no such thing as finality on a political issue, the compromise ending any particular political problem carries within itself the genesis of another. Thus, when the States Reorganization Commission finished its laborious work, one would have expected the final word to have been said. It was, however, only a beginning. The years that followed saw agitations for splitting up many States into smaller ones, either on linguistic or cultural affinities. Success attended some, leading to the formation of States like Maharashtra and Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Agitations which were not successful were the Telengana movement for bifurcating Andhra Pradesh into Telengana and Andhra and for creating Vidarbha State from Maharashtra.

Following a short lull, the issue of smaller States has again raised its head with the change of Government at the Centre. The Home Minister is reportedly of the view that smaller States would be more conducive to better administration, faster development and greater participation of the people in the formation of policy. Jayaprakash Narayan too has for long been canvassing for smaller States as being better for grassroots development. The Prime Minister has postponed a look at the issue only because it may prove to be a Pandora's box, and there are more urgent matters needing attention first. However, the matter cannot be simply brushed under the carpet for long. The emphasis being put on decentralised planning and grassroots development will necessitate taking a closer look at the problem of the ideal size of the unit of administration. An informed political and professional opinion needs to be built up as a base for a further thrust towards decentralisation.

It was against this background that I took up the book for review, imagining it to be a discussion on the merits or otherwise of smaller States, only to find that the title is somewhat of a misnomer. The book, in fact, has a very limited focus. It concentrates only on the Telengana agitation for the bifurcation of Andhra, and then again is confined to the reaction of the elite of one town, Warangal, in the Telengana region towards the Six Point Formula of 1973, which ended the agitation. Sub-regionalism in India as an issue in itself is nowhere considered, and the reader

is left to draw whatever general conclusions he feels like from the facts presented.

After tracing the genesis of the movement for a separate Telengana State from 1969, when a hunger strike was launched by a student, to the explosive situation reached in December 1972, which was defused only with the signing of the Six Point formula in September 1973, after eleven months of President's rule, Kistaiah, on the basis of a sample survey of the educated elite of Warangal town, which was the nerve centre of the agitation for separate Telengana, seeks to answer three questions.

- (1) How far have the intellectuals and people at large understood the formula?
- (2) What is their reaction, attitude and opinion towards the formula?
- (3) What, according to them, are their preferences for integration or bifurcation and about the future of the State?

The 1000 educated elite covered by the sample, through questionnaires and interviews, included lawyers, doctors, college lecturers, public sector personnel, the business community, school teachers, non-gazetted officers and post-graduate students.

His findings on the first question are rather disturbing. On the one hand, there is a wide communication gap between the governors and the governed due to inadequate publicity, so that as many as 40% were completely unaware of what the Six Point formula was all about and only 1.3% could remember 5 points in the formula. If this is the state of affairs in relation to the educated (!), then what about the illiterate masses!

Secondly, the survey showed what has become very evident with the post-Emergency revelations, viz., the failure of the intelligentsia, and the elite to lead, and the insufficient concern displayed by them towards political processes which affect them and have a wide impact on the community, leaving the politicians to influence the masses on irrational populist grounds. One wonders what a similar opinion survey done immediately the Emergency was relaxed, would have revealed about the appreciation of the elite of the issues at stake in the Emergency.

In answer to the second question, Kistaiah concludes that the majority of the intelligentsia was

dissatisfied with the Six Point formula (the backward caste members and sons of the soil, as compared to the immigrants, being the most dissatisfied) on the ground that it was a politically motivated and temporary solution. The majority held that since it didn't satisfy the people, the masses coupled with disgruntled politicians would start another agitation, and it should be a cause for concern that in the absence of an enlightened elite, informed and sensitive to the relevant issues, we will in future, as in the past, find that the masses and the elite participate in a movement without exercising any discrimination, led by the active politicians of the day.

The book has addressed itself to a very narrow perspective and hence has limited value. One wishes that the author could have tied up his findings and observations with some thoughts of his own on sub-regionalism to put the problem in a wider perspective. But his recommendations regarding smaller States are summed up in only one paragraph at the end, viz, that for administrative convenience, and political stability smaller States in a federal set-up appear to be sound, because 'smaller States' could conveniently identify their problems so as to solve them immediately.

Pushpa Sundar

WEST BENGAL—A DECADE (1965-75) by Profulla Roychoudhury. Boipatra, Calcutta, 1977.

FOR quite some time now, West Bengal has been lending itself as a subject of study for an assortment of experts. The past decade occasioned a number of such exercises by a Chamber of Commerce, by planning specialists when the UF came to power and also by scholars and journalists of various hue. Sometimes the accent is on the Naxalite phenomenon, sometimes on a computerised account of voting patterns as collected by foreign observers. Roychoudhury's study spans a period that starts two years prior to the emergence of the United Front in 1967 and he draws the curtain two years before the inglorious exit of Siddhartha Ray and the rather hasty finale by the author makes the reader curious about the likely observation of Roychoudhury on the situation following the scene. The book is published in mid '77 but the author does not venture a postscript despite the sea-change that took place in March and June. His political predilection runs through the pages and occasionally makes him lament that the Congress-CPI alliance which should have delivered the goods did not after all keep occupying the centre of the stage.

The author's frank purposiveness detracts from the facts he has marshalled. West Bengal's ailments are by now well-known. The tragic consequences of an uprooted community in the wake of partition, lack of sympathetic treatment by Delhi to this sea of humanity, lack of foresight of its own rulers in determining priorities, the colonial past in industry, obsolescence of machineries and the

narrow base of industry, neglect of agriculture and the hidebound middle-class which is peculiarly job-oriented, certain decisions of the Centre after the introduction of planning that nearly took away the locational advantages of the State, dependence for food and other essential items of life on other regions, etc., have got compounded over the years making it overwhelmingly difficult for its inhabitants to survive, let alone thrive. It has been persistently going down-hill and a near chaotic situation has obtained since '47.

The author is not unaware of either the facts or the consequences. Only, he chooses to view it through a particular prism with its inevitable distortions and aberrations. He draws heavily on the material of the State Planning Board, frames the questions and poses the problems. He proceeds to assess the workings of successive governments. In the process, however, objectivity sometimes goes by default because of his partisan stance.

His *bete noire* obviously is the CPI(M) which is the biggest political organisation in the State. He shows his tolerance for it only as long as the CPI(M) is prepared to accommodate the CPI and the Bangla Congress despite the fact that the latter has been wiped out politically and the former finds itself in wilderness because of facts well known, but strangely glossed over by the author. His jaundiced view is evident in his assessment of the political process, for example, he believes, and in this he merely refers to reports or rumours, that the origin of the Naxalbari movement could be traced to CPI(M) machinations to create destabilisation, that it was solely responsible for the breaking of the second UF, that it was swept off the political scene in the 1972 elections not because of rigging. He even goes to the fantastic extent of believing that after Siddhartha Ray came to power, thanks to the right ideological stance of the CPI, a large number of CPI(M) cadre actually come over to the CPI fold. He quotes profusely from Mrs Gandhi to buttress his political conviction. One of his major planks is that West Bengal is surrounded by hostile forces in the shape of Bangladesh, China and even the sea whence forces of disruption would threaten to tear off the State from the rest of the country.

However, Roychoudhury, despite himself, can hardly live down his role as a reporter in drawing a thumbnail sketch of the State's economy and particularly the problem of land relations. He decries the cry of discrimination against the State by the Centre but nevertheless elects to describe it as discrimination in favour of certain other States. He dismisses this particular item as a case of uneven progress under capitalist development. What however takes one's breath away is his way of giving kudos to the Ray regime. He even detects measures for toning up the administration under Ray which can at best be treated as a joke, for it was Ray himself who had to appoint the Wanchoo Commission against his own ministers and legislators of his party. It is now common knowledge how

Ray rode roughshod over elementary democratic norms in having his own personal rule perpetrated by himself unlike Mrs Gandhi who did it through a caucus Roychoudhury is also understandably reticent on the political killings that took place during Ray's reign and the indiscriminate use of MISA.

As a political observer the author is not particularly well-equipped even to discern the shape of things to come in '77. Whatever objective material he had at his disposal he could hardly make use of because of his prejudiced outlook and almost pathological dislike for the forces which held their ground during the period of tyranny and then rose out of the ashes of the Emergency in expression of the will of the silent majority.

PKM

STATE POLITICS IN INDIA by Iqbal Narain.
Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut

THOSE who over-reacted to the results of the recent State elections—elation, depression or panic—might have done better by undertaking a study of the political background of the concerned States. As a start, they might have looked at the publication under review printed in 1976, concentrating mainly on the period of 67/71 with a post-script which brings it up to the end of 1974. Of course, these studies, which the author has compiled would give, in the main, a political aerial survey rather than a penetrating study of the forces operating at the State level.

This is no shortcoming of the author. His intentions are impeccable. He has prepared an introductory framework for the study of State politics in the terminology of a sociologist. Only, his contributors, even though a third of them belong to his University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, have not adhered strictly to the framework. Maybe, it's not their fault. The framework is too neat in its complexity for application to all our States and leading union territories. But he meant well. He even recruited, by and large, persons to write about their home States, although for Kerala (with the second highest literacy rate) the names of joint-contributors, D B Mathur, Mohan Lal Sharma and Basu Deo Sharma do not sound exactly Malayalee.

Part of the reason why the writers found it difficult to adhere to the framework might have been its very complexity. To summarize first of all there is the conceptual image underlying the analytic framework. This image consists of no less than five determinants i.e., institutional, physiological, level of politics, socio-economic and political factors, and the elite structure. Having shaped the conceptual image, the author proceeds to construct a three-dimensional framework consisting of the contextual, structural and operational. In the contextual he includes the history of the State, its political status before independence, its role in the struggle for freedom, the integration of former princely

States, its linguistic reorganisation. Then, for additional measure he throws in geography, infrastructure, level and pattern of economic development, human resources, level of education, urbanisation etc. He is comparatively more modest about structure, he identifies the Governor's office, the Chief Minister's office in actuality and potential, political parties, pressure groups and elections. In the third category of operational dynamics he again limits himself to role-orientation, political behaviour and functional dimension.

What the writers were up against can be gauged from the following paragraph: 'As one turns to a discussion of the functional dimension, a theoretical problem that arises at the outset is that of distinguishing the functional dimension from the behavioural aspect. It is true that the two are organically interspersed and, more often than not, the two also tend to overlap each other. And yet the two can be distinguished. While the functional dimension has a distinctive job connotation and, as such, has to be treated in terms of a balance sheet of performance, the behavioural aspect primarily deals with the attitude, values and norms that the functionary brings to bear on his role performance. The functional dimension can be approached from the two angles—one qualitative and the other quantitative.'

Imagine figuring out the functional dimension from the behavioural aspect of Brahmananda Reddy or of Devaraj Urs. When you try to extend the framework to Meghalaya or Arunachal Pradesh it wouldn't be surprising if it comes unstuck.

Nevertheless, this publication being the first of its kind to cover seventeen States and a few Union Territories is useful for its brief, historic, geographic surveys, some vital statistics and a narrative of the political events. In a publication of this kind with diverse writers it cannot help being like the curate's egg, good in parts. What the writers seem to have evaded is a deeper understanding of the local forces, local forces so powerful that eventually they gave rise to regional parties in Tamil Nadu, the Eastern region and Goa. Nor have they come to terms with the interplay of forces between the Centre and the States, not only through the principle artery, i.e., finance, but other vital factors like language, power equations etc.

Then there are aspects which may appear peripheral like the attitudes of certain central figures who don the clothes of pro-consuls viewing their far-flung colonies in the east, south and south-west India. The frequent and repeated demands for reviewing Centre-State relations and occasional pleas for separation will not disappear because they are expressions of anger and despair and therefore might even take a more virulent form if there is no re-orientation in the central attitudes on issues like language, social and cultural habits and so on.

As I said at the beginning, a reading of the publication of this kind would have helped in under-

standing the latest election because there are certain common factors in most of the State political processes. There is the religion-caste-language overlay. Those who had read the chapter on Karnataka, might have inferred that Devaraj Urs had really socked it into the Lingayats and Vokkaligas and therefore had a strong base among the underprivileged. Similarly, Vengal Rao who had turned the tables on the Reddys and the Kammas, did an about turn in the recent elections and went back to the kulaks like his Janata counterparts, thus, making Dr Chenna Reddy appear as the only leader of the down-trodden. It may be also reassuring to know (though not on the basis of the book) that by-elections and limited local elections are no guide to the national elections. psephologists in the mother country of parliamentary democracy have various explanations for this phenomenon.

But, to return to the publication under review, what is obvious is that caste seems to be the single, most important factor closely followed by religion and not class-orientation let alone class polarization. A useful publication as background material. It's a pity that the text is continually marred by misspellings. Even the brief preface has no less than five misspellings such as import for impart, assemptions, contextual, althrough colleagues.

Rudolf Gyan d'Mello

NATIONAL POWER AND STATE AUTONOMY,

Edited by K R Bombwall Meenakshi Prakashan,
Meerut, New Delhi, 1978

It is perhaps inevitable that the search for a rational basis of Centre-State relations is intensified whenever the ruling party at the Centre fails to command the allegiance of some of those in the States.

It happened after the 1967 elections when the Congress failed to line up nine States — big and small — behind it. But what has happened after the 1977 parliamentary elections is almost cataclysmic for those who had all these years considered the existing pattern of Centre-State relations synonymous with the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India. Thus, any suggestion to re-evaluate these relations, to emphasise the need for greater autonomy for the States in terms of developmental and social objectives, have been viewed with horror even at the highest executive level.

The change in the political life of the country is accepted as inevitable with the change in the ruling party at the Centre. Yet, there is total resistance even to hear of the changes that are bound to occur in the Centre's relations with the States ruled by parties with different socio-political aims and objectives.

Thus, we have the amazing spectacle of the Central rulers who are there because of the people's desire for change, refusing to talk about a new

basis of Centre-State relations, leave aside initiating a dialogue on this issue, and still unable to block the debate which is already raging and tending to inch towards the point of confrontation.

Undoubtedly, a lot of sentimental nonsense is being bandied about while refusing to face the practical problems involved and working out solutions for implementation, even in stages. Much of this happens also because of the abundance of misleading information or lack of it.

In this context, the collection of articles in *National Power and State Autonomy*, edited by Dr K R Bombwall, serves a useful purpose. In so far as they examine the different aspects of the problem from a variety of angles, they make a positive contribution in the present dialogue and help avoid a total derailment of the debate on such a sensitive issue.

However, all these contributions were prepared long before the June 1977 elections, and certainly before the March 1978 elections to the State Assemblies, although Dr Bombwall's revised and updated piece referred in passing to the situation arising from the Congress defeat in elections to Parliament and the consequent changes in Indian polity.

The collection analyses the Indian federal system threadbare even though it is described as a 'Union of States' in the Constitution. There are contributions on the question of regionalism and concurrent political pressures, the economic autonomy specifically recognised in the Constitution while hamstrung in practical implementation because of the constraints included in the same Constitution, and the cultural diversities determining the concept of unity and integrity of the country.

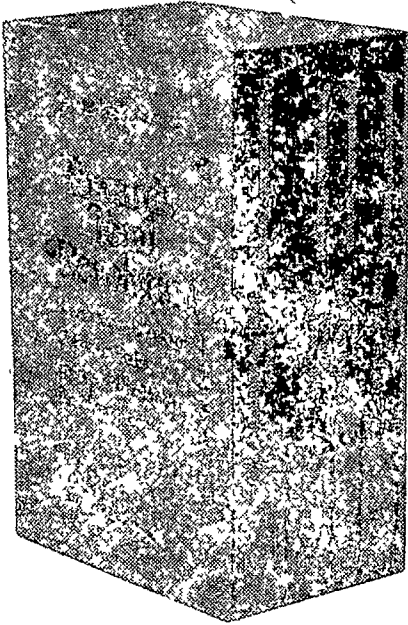
To some extent, these studies have based their analyses on the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission and the developments since then in refashioning Centre-State relations. Some of them have examined the issues pertaining to the extent and exercise of what is known as financial autonomy of the States. But they do not study the implications of totally divergent political aspirations of State administrations in the absence of a Congress monolith at the Centre.

It is also noted that most of the contributions in this collection have naturally based their study and analyses on the situation obtaining before the declaration of Internal Emergency. To that extent these appear academic and outdated. But the factual material marshalled here is useful for a re-interpretation in the new historical context.

All studies on current developments and changing situations suffer from this handicap. But that need not necessarily reduce their utility and value in a continuing dialogue and debate which the discussion of Centre-State relations today is.

Saral Patra

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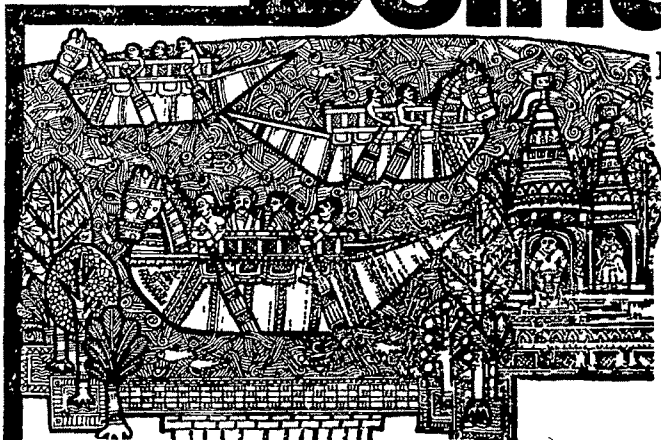
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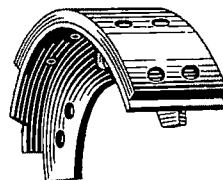
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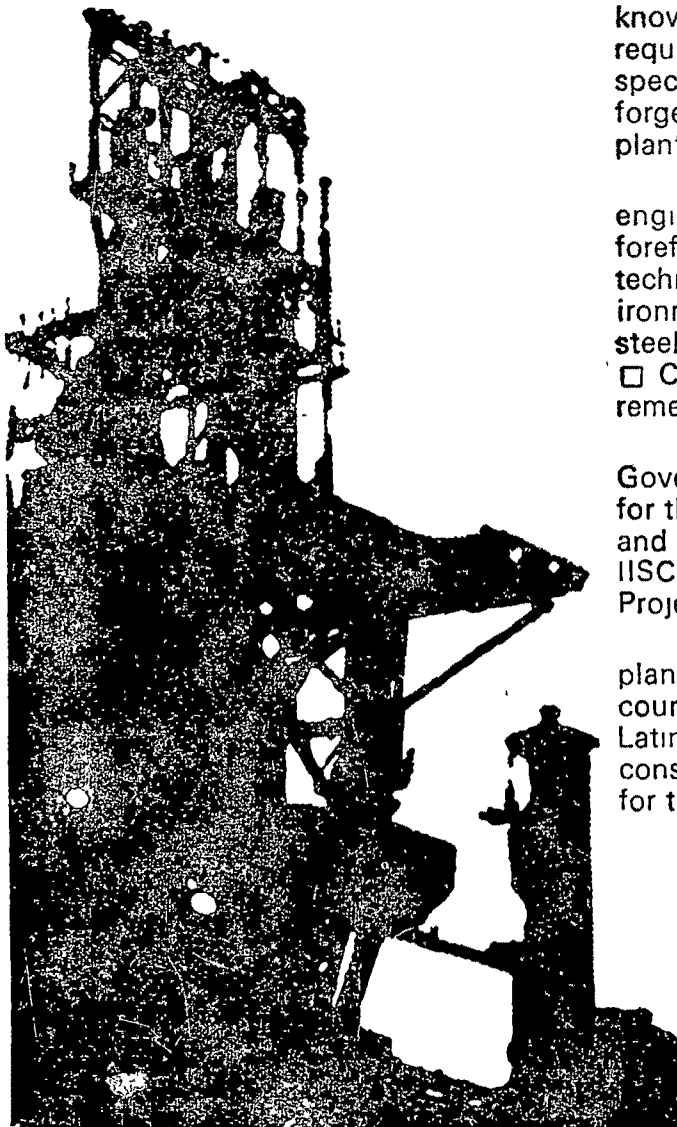
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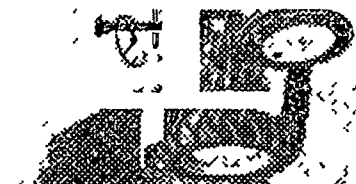
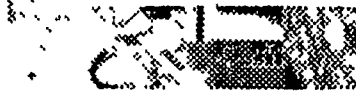
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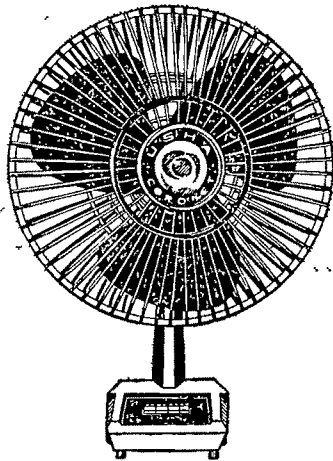
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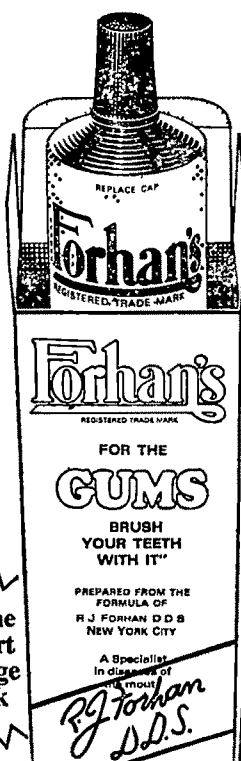
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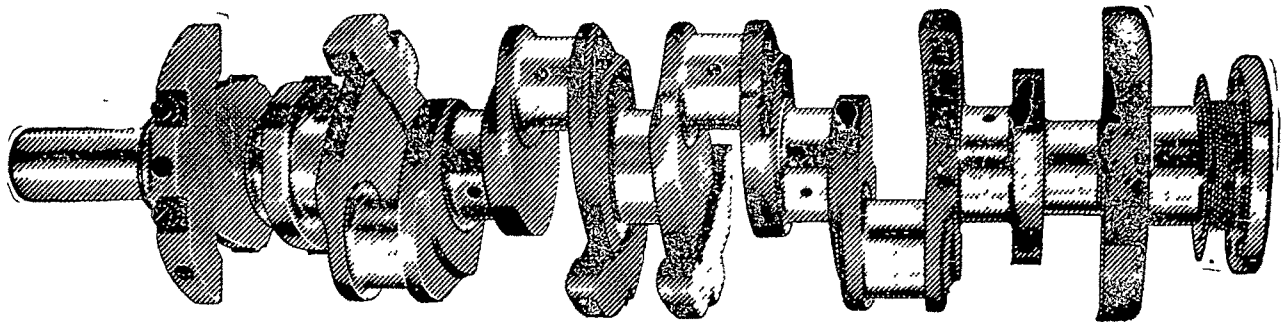
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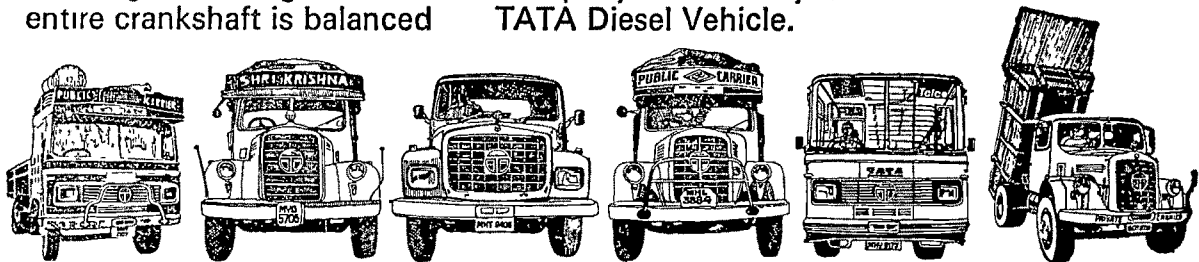
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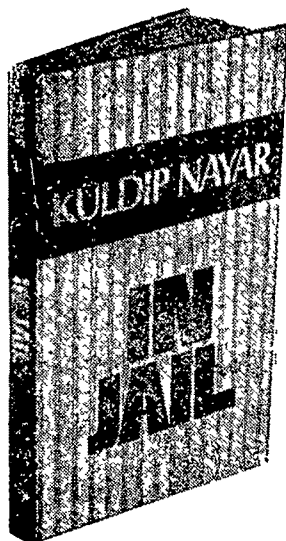


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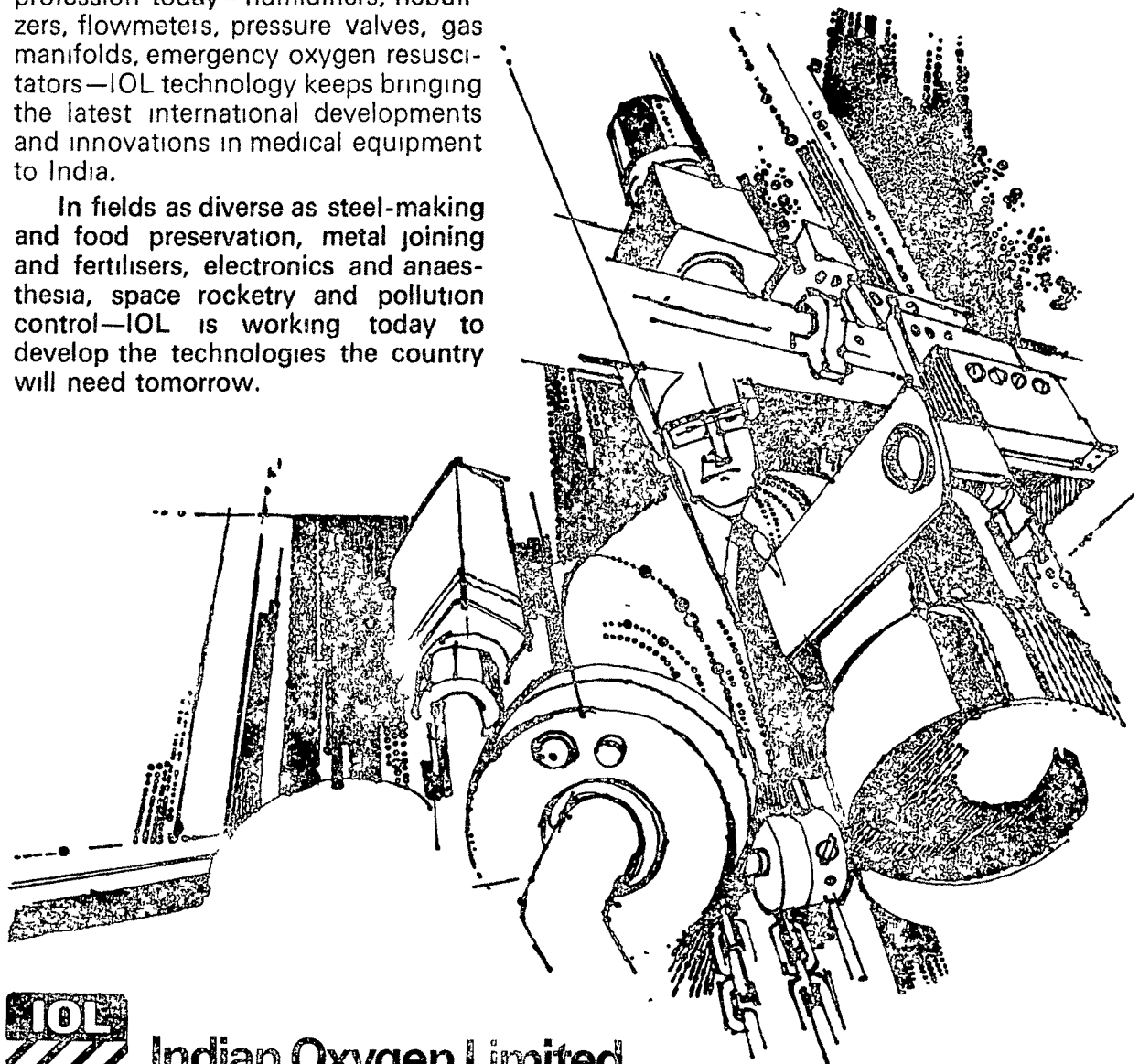
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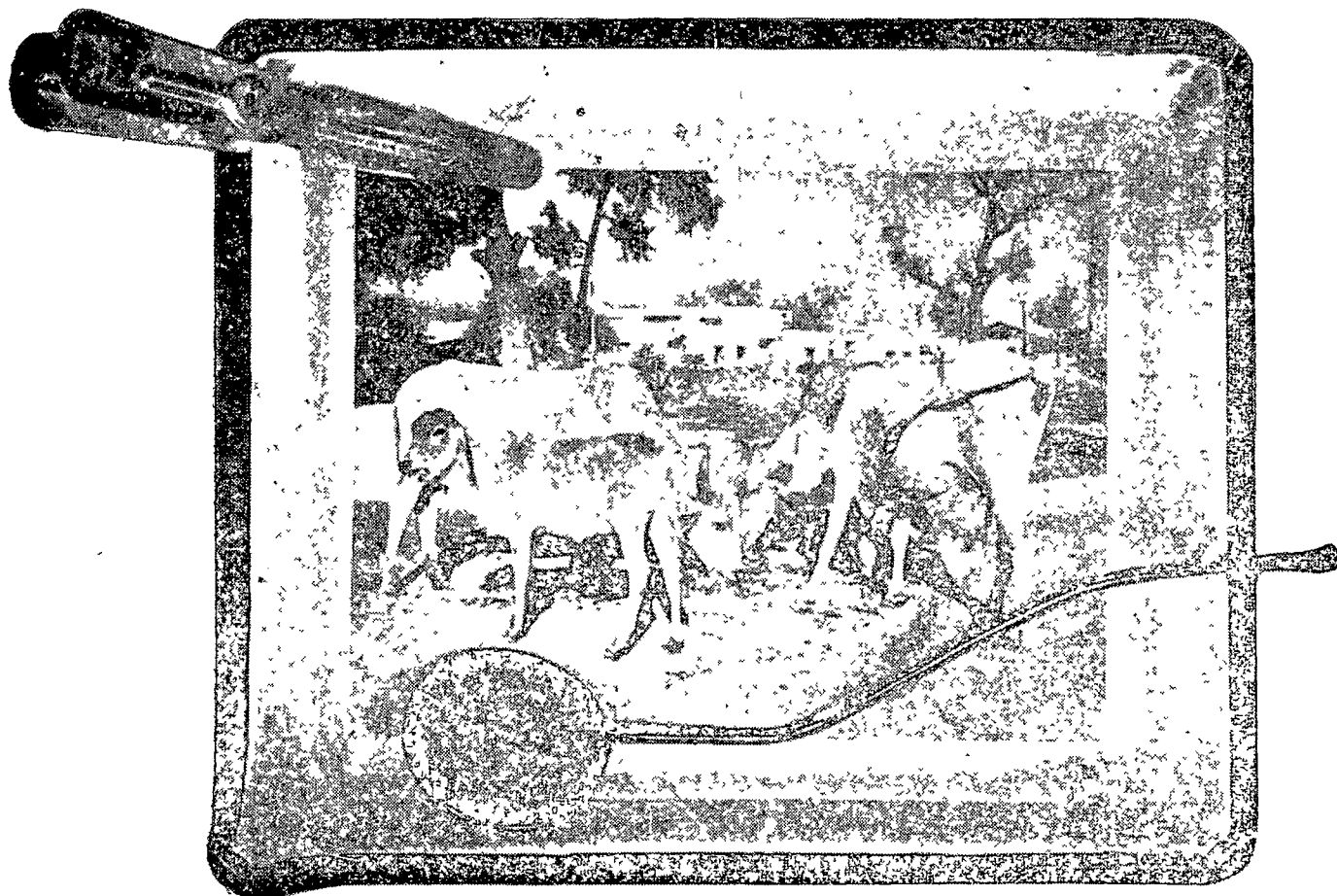
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A select and relevant bibliography compiled by M P Nayar

COVER

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The problem

OUR premise is a hopeful one the mini-detente that has developed between India and its neighbours will continue. Our purpose is not to explore the causes of that detente but to suggest implications for security policy. The recent detente between India and its neighbours is likely to continue, at least at its present glacial pace. What are the strategic and organisational implications of this development? How can management of the security establishment itself contribute to this process, while leaving India insured against a deterioration in the strategic environment? Above all, can India avoid the inadvertent disruption of the process of reconciliation because of unnecessary military actions?

A useful place to cut into a very complex set of issues is by pointing out the difference between perceived military stability and real stability. In deterrence relationships, what is critical is a mutual perception of stability (not necessarily of equality, however). Each side is able to retaliate and punish the other, this is vital in nuclear deterrence, but in South Asia it also applies to conventional weapons,

particularly the application of air power to economic, population, and military centres. Much of the current debate (if it can be called that) over the DPSA* seems to ignore this consideration completely — indeed, so did Pakistan's request to the US for A-7 'attack' aircraft. Such weapons profoundly affect perceptions of stability and point out the danger of two sides adopting strategies of pre-emptive war or, in this case, each drawing the same conclusions from the latest Middle East war.

On another level, of equal importance is real military stability. the calculations of gains and losses vis a vis the enemy that is based on an evaluation of the whole spectrum of military force. Here prospects are more cheering. With the emergence of new generations of cheap and simple guided missiles (especially of the anti-tank and anti-aircraft varieties) some semblance of stability and mutual confidence may be restored to the Indo-Pakistan military balance. In a battlefield environment dominated by such weapons, India's manpower advantage will still prevail, but both sides

*DPSA Deep Penetration Strike Aircraft

will have some assurance against rapid armoured thrusts into their own territory. What might logically be a next step will be some effort to regularize this situation, stalemate in military technology can be reinforced by agreed reductions of force levels, mutual inspection of troop disposition, and pre-notification of manoeuvres and movement (a la MBFR* and NATO-Warsaw Pact agreements). Of particular importance is the stationing of armored units and attack aircraft far enough to the rear on both sides of the border so that neither side feels threatened by a blitzkrieg.

Thus, in contributing to both the perception of stability and actual stability, the acquisition, deployment and control of weapons systems are each part of the process of achieving detente, not a separate sphere of activity.

In all of this, the role of outside powers is critical. The supply and resupply to India and its potential antagonists is part of any calculation of military

stability. On its side, India must recognize Pakistan's sense of military vulnerability and dependence on outside sources of supply, yet, such suppliers must exercise restraint in the types as well as quantities of advanced weaponry supplied to Pakistan, lest either the symbolic or actual military state of military stability be upset.

The China-India military relationship was stalemated many years ago although either side could quickly upset it. In this case it is virtually impossible to defend Indian territory against a determined Chinese thrust, and the natural response must be counter-attack elsewhere followed by bargaining. But all of this is marginal to the looming shadow of China's nuclear capacity and the ever-present threat of escalation. A major drawdown of mountain troops is both feasible and strategically harmless for India (and would save considerable sums of money), but the nuclear problem is genuine.

One encounters two arguments about India's nuclear policy these days (leaving aside the entire ques-

*MBFR, Mutual Balanced Force Reduction

tion of the nuclear power programme. The first is that India's explosion of a PNE* was foolish maintaining the potential for a military nuclear capacity is analogous to introducing the Colt 45 revolver to the American West: proliferation will equalize the large and the small, to India's specific disadvantage. The counter argument stresses the likelihood of proliferation anyway and notes that India will have a big lead over Pakistan for years (and can, if necessary, launch a pre-emptive attack on Pakistan nuclear facilities).

Neither view seems quite right. Pakistan's nuclear plans go back many years and India's nuclear capacity would not have been hampered very much if a PNE had not been set off (Israel is a good example of this). But India has learned that public PNE rattling has its price. The PNE was a foreign policy calamity that was neither militarily nor politically necessary, and has perhaps demonstrated India's insecurity rather than her self-confidence (although the larger Indian nuclear programme seems quite rational). The critical question remains: can India reassure Pakistan of its military good intentions and still be prepared for a Chinese nuclear capacity? To some degree the Indo-Soviet Treaty supplies an umbrella, but such umbrellas have rental fees, can leak, and may draw lightning in a storm.

The solution to India's nuclear security may be in the 'functional equivalent' approach: a declaration of no-first use, accompanied by an independent affirmation of the NPT* backed up by continued but quiet research into explosives and delivery systems. This is the nuclear option strategy. However, it runs the risk of inciting the US and other anti-proliferators. An alternative would be Indian leadership in forging a regional NPT or nuclear free zone outside of the NPT regime. This requires some retreat from the rhetoric of global disarmament towards a pragmatic concern with immediate regional security structures. Again, as in the case of external weapons sources, such a regional arms control regime will require the collaboration of external powers.

What are the domestic and organizational aspects of this analysis? The most important one may be that some of these steps are politically impossible now. Although India has as stable a government as one could ask for, there has been built up over the years a military-industrial-complex which is geared not to strategic innovation but to manpower and hardware. Not unlike its counterpart in the USA and USSR., this giant State bureaucracy is loath to consider reductions in force levels or restraint on weapons production. If this powerful lobby could be tempted into innovation this is what might be done.

———The premise of a million-man army can be reconsidered. It is the world's third largest standing army, a fine fighting machine, but was

built up to meet a triple threat from west, east, and north (and also carried responsibility for internal disturbances and routine border patrolling). Ancillary para-military organizations now perform some of these functions, and a negotiated agreement of force levels might make a major reduction of troop strength possible.

———end the big-ship navy. ASW* and under-sea warfare will dominate naval strategy for years to come, India needs to acquire the latest in these technologies, but no longer has much of a requirement for obsolete carriers, cruisers, and destroyers. A navy that is smaller (in average ship size) but larger (in total ship numbers) may be more effective, and cheaper.

———stop purchases of major weapons systems from abroad, especially the provocative and costly DPSA, unless full R & D transfer accompany them. This is especially vital in areas of missile guidance and advanced electronics which are far more important than platform technology (where India has a considerable level of expertise).

———take a serious look at the social and economic costs of the military establishment. It will be distasteful for many of them to contemplate, but the officer corps, especially in the army, could do more with their resources in the way of education and social change, and make a greater impact on their surrounding environment without entangling themselves in local politics. Self-reliance should apply to the military, not only in matters of weapons and equipment (which are met largely through the State capitalism of the captive arms industry) but in food and clothing. The overall economic impact has yet to be calculated, but the symbolic example of one of the most pampered public sectors will be substantial.

To summarise I conclude by again emphasizing that security policy is more than the simple accretion of weaponry with some vague linkage to foreign policy. Such an approach, with the motto 'more is enough', will not ensure security or will do so at excessive cost. Indian military strategists, responsible for what is now the strength of a great power, must come to the realization that long-term security lies in the peaceful management of relations with neighbours and super powers, and that weapons acquisition and deployment cannot be considered in a political vacuum. To a very great extent regional peace rests upon the security — and perception of that security — of other States in the region, and the management of Indian military policy must necessarily accommodate enemies as well as friends. Our main concern, however, is the possibility that weaponry has taken command, plumage has overwhelmed the peacock.

STEPHEN P. COHEN

*PNE, Peaceful Nuclear Explosion

*PNT, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

*ASW, Anti Submarine Warfare,

External threats

P R CHARI

ENSURING national security involves, in essence, the preservation of national interests and national values. The safeguarding of territorial integrity is a supreme national interest. But there are other interests, and values, in the external or internal spheres, which require preservation. India has pursued, for instance, non-alignment in her external relations. This policy, to an extent, enabled her to protect her national security by balancing her relations with the super powers. For her internal polity, India chose parliamentary democracy and a mixed economy as her preferred political and economic systems. Beyond these values, India has nurtured hopes of shaping a better world through general and complete disarmament, universal peace, reduction of inequalities between rich and poor countries and, more recently, upholding human rights. These external or internal or world order values are best suited to India's genius and interests. Foreign dangers to such values must be considered external threats to India's national security.

We notice that, as an abstraction, India's national interests or national values comprise an admixture of external, internal and world order preferences. Threats to these interests and values clearly can have a military, political, economic or social content. Threats can be long-term or short-term. There are evident linkages between all these aspects of the threat which provide, in their totality, the full spectrum

of external dangers to India's national security. Military planners evaluate the external threat over discreet time frames, but it is proposed to discuss this question here in strategic perspective.

Surveying our post Independence history, and what can be foreseen, external threats to India's national security arise at three levels. In other words, conceptually the threat could occur because three different, concentric forces are operating. The first, and most recognizable level, includes China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and is described as the sub-continental level. The second level comprises the Middle East, South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean. The last, and uppermost level, are the super powers. There are obvious linkages between all these levels of threat emanation. Two other factors must be noticed. First, linkages between these levels could either reinforce or mitigate the external threat. Second, we can recognize positive and negative trends operating within these countries and regions. The specific external threats to India's national security can now be examined against this general background.

We can start with China. A certain euphoria exists regarding good relations with China. Official caution is displayed, however, in parliamentary and public statements. Indubitably, the exchange of Ambassadors in early 1976, followed by visits of various delegations, and re-establish-

ment of trade and shipping ties has created a better atmosphere. The negative factors, however, continue.

First, China has not forsaken her policy of military and political support to Pakistan to bolster that country as a counterpoise against India. Indeed, indications are that China could encourage Bangladesh to perform a similar function. Second, moral and material support is provided by China to Naga and Mizo hostiles; these insurgent movements could spread over the entire north-eastern States. China justifies aiding such movements whilst continuing diplomatic relations by making an invidious distinction between State-to-State, party-to-party and people-to-people relations. So long as this distinction continues to be made, China is likely to help insurgencies, calling them wars of national liberation. For India these actions amount to hostile interference in its domestic affairs.

Third, the border dispute would seriously inhibit growth of Sino-Indian relations. There were many reasons for the Sino-Indian conflict, but the issue was, quite clearly, the border dispute which remains unresolved. Can India forsake its claim to Aksai Chin? Can China give up Aksai Chin and its vital road link through this area? China is still disputing the 'unequal treaties' she signed with Russia over one hundred years ago. Can the Aksai Chin question be more easily resolved? It is difficult to see how the border dispute can be resolved early without offending powerful domestic constituencies in both countries.

There are other fundamental reasons for these negative factors persisting in Sino-Indian relations. The Chinese are believed to be inhibited by Indo-Soviet ties. But such tested links can hardly be sacrificed by India for gaining a larger relationship with China. Are the Chinese inhibited because India offers an alternative political model to Asia? Would an intrinsic rivalry persist between the two countries? It is not possible to answer these questions with any degree of certainty. But it appears that Sino-Indian relations can only improve

up to a point — the border dispute would remain unresolved, and symptomatic of the asymmetry in the relationship.

Analysis becomes more difficult with regard to Pakistan, because of frequent political changes within that country. Students of military affairs believe that civilian leaders in Pakistan are less intransigent than military men. Experience with Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan influences such perceptions, but it is forgotten that Ayub had proposed the joint defence of the subcontinent in May 1959 which was rejected by India. Evaluation of the security threat to India from Pakistan must proceed, therefore, on assumptions that obtain irrespective of the type of leadership in Pakistan.

The positive trends in Indo-Pak relations are clear. First, the Simla Agreement visualised bilateral links being promoted to 'progressively restore and normalise relations'. Measures already taken include resumption of communications and travel between the two countries. Trade has started, so have cultural exchanges. The process of normalisation, through strengthening people-to-people relations, has been slow, because the fear of being culturally overwhelmed continues to haunt Pakistan.

Second, re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1976 induced hopes that the machinery established would promote greater fraternal relations. Missions cannot achieve what the leaderships do not want; however, continuous interaction helps create an atmosphere of normalcy.

Third, a comparative lessening of anti-Indian propaganda is noticeable in Pakistan. Accusing India habitually for Pakistan's difficulties and travails was very obviously designed to divert public attention from inadequacies of the Pakistani leadership. That this ploy was not resorted to, despite the political upheavals in Pakistan during the last year, is quite remarkable. General Ziaul Haque's dealings with India and statements about Indo-Pak relations, for instance, have been very correct, and bilate-

ral visits by the leaders of the two countries is visualised soon.

The negative trends must also be noticed. First, efforts continue to embarrass India in third country and international forums. One example is the South Asia nuclear free zone proposal directed, quite pointedly, against India. Second, frantic steps continue to procure arms from all sources — designed towards achieving military parity with India. Such arms acquisitions only lead to counter procurements by India and arms racing on the subcontinent. Third, Pakistan's efforts to acquire a plutonium reprocessing plant from France, despite considerable U.S. pressure, draws attention to her nuclear ambitions.

Fourth, and most significant, is the India-fixation within the Pakistani elite. This is noticeable from bureaucratic attitudes, academic writings, public speeches and so on. The tendency to exaggerate the threat from India at every conceivable opportunity reflects a lack of self-confidence, but is not conducive to establishing normal bilateral relations.

In long-term perspective, only a limited form of accommodation appears possible with Pakistan. Fears of being absorbed would act as a psychological constraint against Pakistan seeking closer relations with India. The long-term threat from Pakistan will reduce as the Kashmir question regresses into the background. Over a period of time the Kashmir issue seems most likely to become a non-issue, and the link of actual control would get converted into the international border.

The long-term threat from Pakistan would reduce for a more significant reason, viz, her inability to compete with India in the military sphere without any comparable financial resources or industrial base. Even external political support would erode as India's pre-eminence on the subcontinent becomes increasingly visible, and the futility of counterpoising Pakistan against India becomes increasingly evident. A short-term threat from

Pakistan could arise either from an intransigent leadership or over the emotional Kashmir issue, but over the long-term the threat is most likely to reduce in content.

The last country at the sub-continental level appearing on India's security horizons is Bangladesh. The threat is completely different here in quality and intrinsic nature. A direct military threat from Bangladesh is inconceivable considering its military weakness and geographical vulnerability. An anxiety arises, however, that Bangladesh could mount insurgent activity into North-Eastern India. Pakistan used the Chittagong hill tracts traditionally to provide training, arms, moral and material sustenance to Naga and Mizo hostiles. The possibility that Bangladesh could act similarly cannot be ruled out. The probability must, nevertheless, be rated low, because political and economic unrest in Bangladesh could be similarly exacerbated. Domestic dissidence could also be encouraged as a retaliatory measure.

The threat from Bangladesh arises, not from its strength, but from its weakness. At the political level Bangladesh's vulnerability could be exploited by external powers through various forms of coercive diplomacy to adopt anti-Indian postures. Conditions of acute economic distress might lead to an exodus of population into the adjoining States of India, thereby reconstructing the 1971 scenario. Religious sentiments, unless firmly shackled, could also lead to a selective exodus of the minority population into India with unpredictable consequences.

India's interests lie in maintaining conditions of stability in Bangladesh. But conditions of instability seem inherent within that country, and can be exacerbated by external intervention. Herein lies the true dimensions of the security threat from Bangladesh. It needs adequate recognition that economic assistance to Bangladesh is really an investment in India's stability. Relations with Bangladesh would continue to be uneasy — Farakka symbolises this unease, and this problem could be resuscitated despite recent agree-

ments. Over the coming years, there could be other similar irritants in Indo-Bangla relations symptomatic of the basic asymmetry in this relationship.

At the intermediate level of external threats to India's national security, the Middle East is considered first. The threat arises either through possible linkages with Pakistan or independently.

The position of Afghanistan and Iran merit special attention. India's ties with Afghanistan have historically been warm. Afghan relations with Pakistan are bedevilled by the Pakhtun problem which manifests itself through Afghan support to dissent in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. Afghan relations with Iran have become cordial. Iran's relations with Pakistan underwent change after 1971, and underwent further change in 1973 with the accrual of oil power to Iran. A reversal occurred in the dominant-subordinate relations between the two countries, previously Pakistan led, now she follows Iran. And the growth in Iranian-Indian relations after 1973 has enhanced Iran's scope for manoeuvre. A growing Iranian-Afghan-Indian entente can be faintly discerned.

Pakistan has drifted more and more into the Arab fold, and has developed close links with the conservative monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and the Emirates. Pakistani military personnel have entered their armed forces, either as trainers or as regular combatants. Saudi influence, especially, is encrusting slowly in Pakistan, as Saudi Arabia converts her money power into economic largesse and political powers. Besides, the inflow of sophisticated weaponry into the Middle East, generally, and the Gulf nations in particular, has converted these regions into arms reservoirs. The possibility of seepage of arms from this reservoir cannot be ignored. The threat of India arises, at one level, through likely arms transfers into Pakistan from the Middle East. The disconcerting fact is that neither the timing, nor type, nor quantum of arms likely to be transferred into Pakistan can be precisely quantified.

At another level, oil supplies to India could be reduced or cut off during a crisis. Such coercive action by Arab States would have limited military repercussions because POL reserves are carefully maintained. Sources of supply from the Middle East are also diversified. Moreover, India's domestic oil production is increasing. Further, over a period of time Indian skilled personnel in the Gulf States could become local constituencies plainly inhibiting anti-Indian actions. In essence, the threat from the Middle East is also likely to regress as the threat from Pakistan reduces and India's linkages with these countries get more extensively established.

South-East Asia impinges upon India's security horizons in two ways. First, the feeling persists that Indonesian interests clash with those of India in the Indian Ocean region — Soekarno's assistance to Pakistan in 1965 is recalled here. Second, insurgency in Burma could spill over into North-Eastern India: the situation would exacerbate if Burma loses control over its northern territories.

The Indonesian bogey is highly exaggerated. Their navy is in a poor state due to lack of spares for the predominantly Russian ships. The leadership is, moreover, immersed in internal political/economic problems. Besides Indonesia perceives the fear of communist infiltration as the main external threat. There is hope that India might checkmate Chinese influence and possible inroads into South Asia. This would provide Indonesia with a *cordon sanitaire* on its western frontiers. For India, consequently, Indonesia is not a security factor.

The same is not true about insurgency in North Burma, which has continued for three decades. It is widely known that insurgent groups like Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Eastern Naga Revolutionary Council (ENRC), operating in North Burma, have fraternal links with Indian Naga and Mizo rebels. Chaotic conditions in Northern Burma, therefore, present dangers to stability in the insurgency-affected regions of North Eastern India.

The authority of the Burmese government is restricted, at present, to a nominal presence in many areas. The situation is likely to exacerbate should China and Vietnam encourage rival insurgent groups and escalate insurgency activity in Burma. Fluctuations in insurgent activity within South-East Asia, the clash between Chinese and Vietnamese aided insurgent groups, arms flows into the region and related developments would require careful and continuous scrutiny and evaluation

Turning towards the Indian Ocean, a problem arises because the threat is difficult to evaluate in precise terms. Diego Garcia has an interventionist capability, and the Seventh Fleet has a shore-projection capability. But against whom? And for what purpose? Reflection on these questions reveals the futility of railing against Diego Garcia without acknowledging the utility of a checkmating Soviet presence. To convert the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace is a laudable, ultimate objective, but a balancing of American and Soviet presence in the short-term would serve India's self-interests. Again, the American presence is primarily directed towards protecting US interests in the Gulf region — South Asia is incidental in American perceptions

No discussion of the threat to India's national security from the Indian ocean region is complete with out reference to Iran's naval build up. In some circles these developments indicate a long term maritime threat to India. It is argued that Iranian and Indian interests would clash in the region as their navies acquire greater oceanic capabilities. Such argumentations proceed on the assumption that the Iranian and Indian navies are the only ones which inscribe a presence in the Indian Ocean. It is unlikely that this would ever be the case. Iran can only turn eastwards if she is checkmated in the Gulf by Saudi Arabia. It is thus not clear why the two navies should clash in the absence of underlying political motivations. We have noticed the likely evolution, in fact, of an Iran-Afghanistan-India constellation of powers

Coming to the last tier of nations affecting India's national security, viz, the super powers, we must appreciate that their mutual adversary relationship interacts with that obtaining between India and Pakistan. This is evident from the historical pattern of arms transfers to the sub-continent. India turned to the Soviet Union in the 1962-64 period when she was refused modern arms by the UK and the US. Pakistan began receiving U.S. arms in the fifties under the Mutual Aid Treaty. After the 1965 arms embargo was imposed, Pakistan turned to China and France. Beyond their mutual adversary relationship, super power perceptions and policies towards the subcontinent are also conditioned now by the Sino-Soviet confrontation

A greater harmonisation of Indo-US relations is presently expected. But the harsh realities governing the relationship show that national interests cannot be subordinated to a common dedication to democracy and human rights. The U.S now accepts the failure of its earlier policy of balancing Pakistan against India. But the supply of fuel for Tarapur is a major irritant in Indo-US relations. India cannot jeopardise its nuclear option by accepting safeguards upon its autonomous nuclear facilities. The United States cannot treat India differently from other countries receiving nuclear technology/materials, whose nuclear programmes are sought to be safeguarded to achieve global non-proliferation ends. This fundamental clash of interests was evident during President Carter's visit to New Delhi

Indo-Soviet relations appear to be in flux. The dominance of India on the subcontinent after 1971 has reduced India's dependence on Soviet political and military support. Rouble credits are proving difficult to absorb, and the rupee-rouble parity issue is an irritant in the relationship. With regard to military supplies India seems to be diversifying its sources towards western supplies.

One construction possible, therefore, of the policy of 'genuine non-alignment' is that it is intended to

permit India to be 'independent' of the super powers, and also 'equidistant' from them. Such a policy could be best achieved by stressing India's strength rather than accentuating her vulnerabilities. National security can also be safeguarded by encouraging favourable reactions to India's capacity to act as a mediatory factor in world politics.

A summation of the overall threat to India's national security can be attempted. A long-term threat from China can be expected, as also a long-drawn-out threat from instability in Bangladesh. A threat from Pakistan arises in the short-term, but would reduce over the long-term. The quality/quantum of threat from the Middle East is uncertain and reveals opposite trends: it would, however, reduce over a period of time. That from South-East Asia arises from guerilla activities spilling out of Northern Burma. The threat from the Indian Ocean is too nebulous to permit rational evaluation. At the uppermost level, super power interests in India have been conditioned by their mutual adversary relationship, in future it can be expected that their interactions with India would not be linked to their relationship with Pakistan

By way of a conclusion, it might be stressed that external threats can intermesh with internal discord. For instance, insurgency in North-Eastern India would be exacerbated by external help. It can be argued that a solution to this problem lies in political adjustments, better administration, larger development efforts, and so on: hence the problem has a primarily internal dimension. In a fundamental sense this is quite true. There are other internal dangers like the Naxalite movement, urban unrest and agrarian dissatisfaction. Besides, one party holds power at the Centre and in the heartland of India, but opposing parties are in power on the peripheries. Space does not permit more than a mention of these situations. But a conceivable linking of these internal threats with external influences defines the fuller matrix of India's external national security problems.

Preparedness

M L THAPAN

AN examination of the military threats to India must proceed from certain agreed premises. Firstly, the development of nuclear weapons has introduced a new dimension to warfare, amongst other predictions, which are horrifying enough, we may be sure that wars of long duration are out. The second world war, which lasted six years was, therefore, probably the last of its kind. It could be argued that this prediction is not wholly relevant because of our public professions to eschew the development and use of nuclear weaponry. Also, the example of Vietnam may be quoted, to show that the time frames of military conflicts are still not necessarily brief.

Neither of these arguments have validity in our context. It is inconceivable that the unilateral use of nuclear weapons by a belligerent will not attract international intervention, the possibilities of escalation are too serious to permit of ideal contemplation. The prolonged conflict in Vietnam was sustained only because of super power interest, for reasons which are not relevant to our present purpose. If, therefore, wars of long duration are now only historical, and our

own experience since Independence has been that of short military engagements; it must be our aim to train for the short, sharp wars, which we shall have to face in the future. This presupposes a very high state of battle preparedness.

The second premise on which there must be agreement is the definition of a military threat. The vastness of our land borders, our coastline and air space impose certain constraints on the deployment of our land, sea and air forces. To these must be added the varied nature of our frontier terrain, ranging from thick jungle in the east, the cold, inhospitable, high altitude north, the fertile plains and deserts of the west. A minor territorial incursion in this massive arc may have no real military implication, it may not seek to test our overall military strength, but it does have political connotation, in as much as being a violation of our territorial sovereignty. The Armed Forces are charged to deal with this, on the same level as an attack on a premeditated mass scale, thus compelling them to remain in operational locations, keyed up to quick response. The evolution of our military philosophy

since Independence has, therefore, been to build up a capacity to deal with threats ranging from the micro to the macro level, and any variant in between

It does not require a great deal of crystal-gazing to determine which of our land neighbours may pose military threats to us. They are only two, China and Pakistan, and we may discuss them in that order.

We need not linger over our relations with the Chinese since Independence, after their military occupation of Tibet, culminating in the aggression of 1962. A dispassionate analysis of the events which took place after 1950 would suggest that Chinese policy towards us was based on the following considerations:

- (a) The need for establishing an effective military presence in Tibet, to support the political policy of occupation. This resulted in the Indo-Tibet border becoming 'live' for the first time.
- (b) The necessity to maintain effective surface communications with Sinkiang, a Chinese province, bordering the USSR; resulting in the construction of a road, through our territory, in Aksai Chin
- (c) Our communication and military inadequacies on this border, when Chinese probing commenced. Militarily, we had passed through a 'twilight' decade after Independence, when our defences on the northern border had been neglected, as part of a deliberate policy. The realisation that the Chinese challenged our interpretation of our international boundaries came too late, after physical encroachments had taken place
- (d) In the absence of a political settlement, the Chinese have chosen to adopt a policy of continuous confrontation on the border, since 1962. This compels us to treat China as a potential military aggressor

is this confrontation to continue? And what forms are the threats likely to take? Before an attempt is made to answer this question, it is necessary to survey, briefly, our land neighbours, the border terrain, and certain special features of warfare at high altitude, which are crucial to an understanding of the issue. We may start from the east and proceed anti-clockwise

The emergence of Bangladesh as our newest neighbour in 1971 came about in circumstances which are of recent memory. Much has happened in that country since liberation by Indian forces. Politically, it is unstable after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman; there are various groups in the armed forces and outside who are aspirants for power; its economy is still in poor shape and internal communications not fully restored and, above all, it suffers from a frightening population density and growth. Ironically, there is little recognition, by leaders of all shades of opinion in Bangladesh, of the assistance given by India in permitting its creation. This makes the task of those powers who are so disposed to bolster Bangladesh hostility towards us, relatively simple. Militarily, the Bangladesh armed forces are weak at present, but it is well to remember that a military junta always has some military ambitions. Continued internal instability in that country has its effect on West Bengal, and the ever-present influx of refugees poses security problems for us. Ordinary prudence would suggest to us the allocation of some military resources to deal with possible irritations in this sector.

We may now take a look at Burma. How far does the writ of the Ne Win Government run? The traditional warring tribes of Burma — the Karens, Kachins and Shans — are all decidedly and determinedly anti-Burmese. The Burmese Communist Party is openly supported by Peking. There is reportedly a KMT presence in the Shan States, if true, it is a poor commentary on the effectiveness of Burmese governmental authority. There is no threat, as such, to India from the Burmese themselves, as

Indo-Burmese relations have remained friendly. However, their weak control of the Burma-India border and the Bangladesh-Burma border, poses security problems. Sanctuaries become available to hostiles from Nagaland and Mizoram and give rise to a recrudescence of their activities. A Chinese attack on India, through Burma, though possible, would be difficult, because of the topography and the obvious political implications.

We must now turn our attention to the Indo-Tibet border, a massive tract, whose length is 2000 miles or more. Three States, two of them foreign, abut this border; Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal; and we may study these first.

Historically, the Government of Bhutan has accepted guidance from India in regard to defence matters and foreign relations. The Royal Bhutan Army was built with Indian assistance, but it is too weak to deal with any major aggression across its northern border; even though the terrain, climatic and communication difficulties facing an invader, would be formidable. The possibility of an attack on Bhutan in isolation is remote, but our treaty obligations for the defence of that country remain and, to that extent, have to be catered for in our order of battle.

Recent years have seen a change in the political status of Sikkim from a former protectorate to a State of the Indian Union. Militarily, it holds high priority, for, two motorable roads lead from the well garrisoned Chumbi Valley in Tibet, over the Nalu La and Jelep La Passes, into Sikkim and thence to the Siliguri 'corridor'. Notwithstanding the terrain and climatic hazards, the military threat to India through the Chumbi valley is serious, it necessitates a substantial and constant presence to counter it

Chinese influence in Nepal, particularly in the construction of the sensitive Kodari-Kathmandu road, has been pronounced. Political relations between India and Nepal have followed the see-saw pattern; but there is hope that pragmatism, if nothing else, will convince the Nepalese of the part

The question logically, which poses itself before us is: 'How long

which India plays in the well being of their country. A violation of Nepalese territory for an attack on India is a remote possibility, though such a potential military threat does exist should a break down of authority take place in Nepal. This threat may have a low profile, but the cost of meeting it has to be entered in our defence inventory.

The frontier between India and China in Arunachal Pradesh is virtually the McMahon line, which runs along the Himalayan watershed. There are three important passes in this region, two of which would enable the invader to get to the worthwhile military objectives of Dibrugarh and Digboi, and Tezpur respectively. Chinese claims, as spelt out in their cartographic aggressions from time to time, go down to the north bank of the Brahmaputra River. It is significant that one of these claims was made during the Chiang Kai-shek regime — and not corrected even after protest; a reminder of the earnestness of Chinese beliefs, irrespective of ideology. Can we afford to be militarily negligent in this area after our experience of 1962?

On the UP-Tibet border, the Chinese have laid claim to Barahoti and Nilang, but worth while military objectives in India lie further south. There is a recognisable military threat here, which could increase substantially if operations in this sector were undertaken conjointly with other adjacent areas.

In Himachal Pradesh, the main entry is through Shipki La and a pass to its west, to which the Chinese have laid claim. Here, again, worthwhile military objectives are fairly deep, though the upper reaches of the Sutlej River and the Bhakra Dam complex may prove a strong attraction.

The boundary from Karakoram to Demchok in Ladakh extends for nearly 800 miles. The terrain, as elsewhere on the Indo-Tibet border, is all above 11,000 feet, the climate very cold and dry. The Chinese are in physical occupation of Aksai Chin and certain other areas on the Ladakh-Tibet border. We have had a military presence in Ladakh since 1947, but the logistic difficulties of

supply are immense. The Chinese are here in some strength and, because of their proximity, the danger of pre-emptive aggression is very great. The need for a strong military presence is self-evident.

We should dwell for a while on certain special features of warfare at high altitude, so that the lay reader may understand why troops have to be maintained there in a state of constant vigil. The first and foremost need is that of acclimatisation. Ideally, the process takes a minimum of ten days, acclimatizing by stages. This is only the introduction; there are physiological and psychological changes which follow. The lack of oxygen and extreme cold reduce physical efficiency. Loneliness and the sense of isolation have their effect on morale. Thinking processes slow down. All these must be countered by prolonged residence in that environment, so that the will to fight remains unimpaired. Close confrontation with the Chinese, over the years, has had its advantages, in that it has made us more aware of the peculiarities of operations in those regions.

Communications are difficult and susceptible to disruption by rain, wind and snow. Wheeled movement, off the road except in parts of Ladakh, is not possible. There is, therefore, a need to employ animal transport and porters. The weather is unpredictable and the cloud base low. This poses problems of air supply. Dropping zones are few and the payload of aircraft operating at altitudes of 20,000 feet or so greatly reduced. Telephone lines communications are frequently down and resort has to be made to radio, with attendant risks to communication security.

Administration, in the military sense, assumes great importance in mountainous regions. Because of the vulnerability of surface communications, advance stocking of supplies, ammunition, petrol, oil and lubricants has to be carried out. This poses a strain on mechanical transport, whose engine wear and tear is already aggravated by operations on indifferent roads in low gear, in oxygen-starved conditions. Medical treatment, particularly the evacuation of casualties, becomes

difficult. Extreme cold clothing, special rations and fuel for warming and drying have to be provided to the troops; all of which add to maintenance problems and costs.

The behaviour of weapons, too, undergoes a change in these forbidding conditions. Low temperatures tend to make metal brittle, in sub-zero temperatures the inadvertent grasp of a rifle barrel by an ungloved hand may result in loss of skin from the palm. The trajectory of small arms weapons differs because of the rarefied atmosphere. Range finding becomes difficult because of the general absence of vegetation and the remarkable clarity of topographical features. There are problems of crest clearance for the artillery. The replenishment of ammunition to isolated positions off the road, under battle conditions, is a nightmare.

The question was posed earlier: 'How long is this confrontation with China to continue and what forms is it likely to take?' An attempt may now be made to answer it. The first part of the question is relatively easy to deal with. Confrontation will continue, so long as there is no political settlement, and there are no tangible signs of this happening. Many factors are involved.

- (a) 'Face'. An oriental term, perhaps, but which seems to govern the political actions of both orientals and occidentals, even in this age of mass enlightenment. Who is to give in first? We have already had a change of political leadership in both countries. Will we have to wait for a further change?
- (b) Power groupings. Sino-Soviet relations are much the same as they were, sour or bitter, in turn. The USA has adopted a conciliatory policy towards China, but still professes detente with the Soviet Union. The Chinese do not believe that we are equidistant between the USA and the Soviet Union, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship has served to heighten Chinese mistrust of our intentions towards them. Do we

have innate strength to deal with China on bilateral terms?

- (c) The demonstrated growth of Chinese association with Pakistan makes one wonder whether they are really interested in a thawing out of Indo-Chinese relations. The melancholy conclusion one draws from these deliberations is that a friendly, but strong India, would be anathema; to the Chinese, a weak, supplicant India, a joy.

The second part of the question, is more difficult to answer. The International Institute of Strategic Studies, London believes* that, in the Lanchow and Sinkiang Military Region (which includes Tibet), there are deployed 20 Main Force Divisions and 8 Local Forces Divisions. Not all these forces would be available for exclusive use in Tibet; any large scale aggression contemplated would require their augmentation. This would be a tedious operation, given the present state of communications between China and Tibet.

If we are to go by past experience, the magnitude of the task and the danger of international repercussions, a major invasion of India, by China, across the Himalayas, would appear to be ruled out. If this had to be attempted, it should have been done in 1962, when our guard was down. Our state of military preparedness is far better now than it was in 1962. This should not suggest a reversion to complacency. Nothing is more deterrent to a potential aggressor than visible military readiness and the determination to repulse all incursions.

What then are the alternatives remaining? After the stalemate of 1962, there are no fresh political grounds for the resumption of limited attacks, such as those of the preceding years. There has to be some provocation, and there has been none from our side. Of course, we could be offered provocation, such as that which resulted in an exchange of fire in October 1967 in

Sikkim. We did not rise to the bait then, and are unlikely to do so again. The mature attitude to pin pricks is that of controlled response; a super power such as the Soviet Union did nothing more when incidents involving their frontier guards on the Ussuri river took place in 1969.

The last alternative is action in collusion with those whose interests are inimical toward us, or with hostile powers. This could cover war by proxy, such as intensified support to the Naga insurgents, increased assistance to dissident Mizos, stirring up of anti-Indian feelings in Bangladesh, Burma, Bhutan and Nepal. How far these last would work would depend on the skill of our diplomacy and our relations with our neighbours.

So far as collusion with Pakistan is concerned, our experience of 1965 and 1971 showed that the Chinese gave only tacit support to their ally. This may not be so in any future conflict with Pakistan. Given the relative strengths of the Indian and Pakistani armed forces, and their commitments for deployment, it is obviously to the advantage of Pakistan if China could ensure that no transfer of our troops facing her, takes place, to augment the force levels deployed against Pakistan. And, if both China and Pakistan succeeded in stirring up trouble for us in Bangladesh, we could be faced with the prospect of having to detach some forces to look after that border, too.

Although it is not necessary for us to go into the genesis of our other belligerent neighbour, Pakistan, it is helpful to remember its *raison d'être*, which was the establishment of 'a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent'. This was belied by the breakaway of Bangladesh in 1971; and the resultant figures of the Muslim elements in the population of Bangladesh (75 million), Pakistan (60 million), and India (55 million), speak for themselves. If one were to attempt a definition of Pakistan's national aim, one might say it is the search for an identity, separate from India, however difficult. In its 31 years of existence, Pakistan has gone through

several vicissitudes, parliamentary democracy, martial law, 'basic democracy', martial law, a form of constitutional government evolved by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and back again to martial law. Its political instability is demonstrably chronic.

Whatever may be the threats, real or imaginary, to Pakistan from its neighbours, India occupies pride of place. Perhaps this is because of the events before and after Partition, when the State of Pakistan was created. A deep seated belief in the minds of their political and military leadership is that India is as unreconciled to its existence as it was to its creation. They find proof of this fear in India's size, its growing economic, industrial and military potential, in the manner of Kashmir's accession to India in 1947; the military frustration of the wars fought in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971, which resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan. Hence, the psychosis that partnership with India can only be on a 51-49 basis; hence the feverish military build up and the creation of an atmosphere of permanent crisis. Pakistan needs India as a bogey; if we were not there we would surely have to be invented. This explains, perhaps, why the mass of her military strength remains deployed against us.

The stability of Pakistan internally, is threatened by divisive linguistic forces, the traditional independence of its Pathan and Baluchi tribesmen, and economic disparities. There is a real fear of Punjabi domination and the resultant imbalance of regional economic growth. The refugees from India, particularly the non-Punjabis, who were the loudest protagonists of Pakistan before its creation, have shared little of the growth cake. Although General Zia-ul-Huq has permitted the resumption of political activity, it is still under a degree of control. How long personal rule can last is a matter of conjecture, so long as the economy remains stable, it may succeed. When things go wrong, alibis become difficult to accept. And it is at these moments that the bogey of India is raised, to serve as an outlet for the expression of national frustration.

*Source acknowledgement: 'The Military Balance 1977-78' published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London.

A nation's capacity to fight a sustained war is dependent on several factors. Amongst them are the state of its economy, the quantum of build-up of military manpower, armament and war material, its capacity for producing defence requirements indigenously, and its political will. Some figures are of interest in assessing Pakistan's capacity for such a war. In 1975-76, military spending constituted 43.6 per cent of the Central Budget. Expressed as a percentage of Gross National Product, it was almost 10, (in the preceding four years it ranged from 7-10), which is a significantly high figure for a developing country.

Pakistan's national economy has not been in a particularly healthy state, all four years from 1971-72 onwards have seen a trend of deficits in revenue. Much of these deficits have been met by foreign aid, but debt servicing has posed its own problems. Indigenous defence production has now been established over a limited range of items, but the degree of dependence on foreign countries for complete assemblies and sophisticated items, is large. Energy supply is a big problem. Pakistan produces less than half its annual coal requirements and about 11 per cent of its oil. Discoveries of natural gas are changing the fuel and power situation, but only gradually.

There is, of course, the question of gifting of war material. The USA no longer fills its role as a donor, as it did in 1954, under the Military Aid Programme. China is the main supplier, purchases are made in the international arms market, and there are supplies from Arab countries. To what extent they feed the military machine, it is difficult to say. There is a real danger of arms transfers, there is also the concomitant problem of the capability of the armed forces to absorb diverse equipment.

Several means could be adopted to make a comparison of the relative strength of the armed forces of Pakistan and India. They could be measured by the quantum of military spending, by the overall strengths of military manpower, by the numbers and quality of war equip-

ment held by either country, and last, but not least, by their demonstrated fighting capability. None of these means, taken in isolation, would provide a true index of relative military capability. This is quite apart from the fact that full information on defence matters will seldom be available. The general public has to be content with assessments made by specialists in defence matters. As an illustration, we may use one yardstick — the number of army field formations believed to be possessed by either side. The International Institute of Strategic Studies assesses them as in the table given.

<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>India</i>
2 Armoured Divisions	2 Armoured Divisions
14 Infantry Divisions	17 Infantry Divisions
	10 Mountain Divisions
3 Independent Armoured Brigades	5 Independent Armoured Brigades
3 Independent Infantry Brigades	1 Independent Infantry Brigade
2 Air Defence Brigades	1 Parachute Brigade
	14 Independent Artillery Brigades

A simple totalling of these formations will give us only part of the picture, it will not take into account the organic differences in field formation establishments, or operational commitments elsewhere, such as those on India's northern and north eastern borders, which immediately take away the mountain Divisions. The picture now becomes very different and a state of near-parity in ground forces is depicted, quite unrelated, for example, to the assessment of overall army strengths by the International Institute of Strategic Studies*, which are Pakistan 400,000 and India 950,000. It is superficial comparisons such as these which are often the cause of criticism of defence expenditure.

A *casus belli* for a Pakistani attack on India would not be diffi-

*Source acknowledgement: 'The Military Balance 1977-78' published by the Institute of Strategic Studies, London.

cult to propagate, once the political or military leadership in that country felt the need for an alibi. It could be the liberation of Kashmir, whose inhabitants are supposedly groaning under the Indian yoke. As has been demonstrated in the three Indo-Pakistan wars since Independence, there is little to attract the Kashmiri from India to throw in his lot with the Kashmiri from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. If anything, the economic condition of the latter is relatively poor, and political activity almost at a standstill. But this would not prevent the trotting out, once again, of solicitous cries for a 'jihad' in Kashmir.

Alternatively, it could be the distribution of river waters. Notwithstanding the agreement on the sharing of the waters of the Indus Basin, Pakistan is acutely conscious of the fact that her major rivers rise in, or flow through Indian territory. A lean monsoon for her, may mean too little water, a good monsoon, too much. In either case, India is a useful whipping boy. Or, it could be communal disturbances in India, with 'Islam in danger', as the slogan for battle.

Whatever be the provocation, or lack of one, what we have to guard against is a 'Pearl Harbour' type of attack. This has happened to us once before, in 1965, when armed columns were infiltrated *en masse*, into Kashmir, without warning. It is this form of attack which has some hopes of initial success. And though a long war is ruled out, when the cease fire is imposed — whether unilaterally or by international sanction — the balance of advantage would lie with the side who had gained more territory. This would form the basis for bargaining at the peace conference, though sometimes no bargaining takes place, as in the case of the seizure of Egyptian territory by Israel after the Arab-Israeli war of 1971, which is still under Israeli occupation. It is these realities which explain our large standing army and its near battle operational deployment.

This study has concerned itself mainly with the threats to India's security from the land. There are threats to India also from the sea,

and air, an examination of which rightfully lies in the province of the professional sailor and airman. Perhaps a few of these threats may be enumerated. Translated into tasks for the navy they are to protect Indian and foreign shipping plying in our territorial waters, to defend our ports, harbours and coastal installations against sea-borne attack, and to carry the war to the enemy's coastline. Offshore oil installations such as Bombay High, are attractive targets for saboteurs or would be invaders; they are relatively easy to damage and the effort involved would be quite disproportionate to the disruption caused to our economy. They require special, whole time protection.

The threats from the air may arise in conjunction with land or sea-borne attack, or in isolation, against vulnerable targets, irrespective of their nature, military or civilian. Our air force, therefore, has a complexity of tasks, air defence, close air support and interdiction on behalf of the army, air transport support to the army and other agencies who require it, and strategic bombing, deep in the enemy's heartland. History has yet to record an example of a war being won by passively sitting on the defence.

The moral, if there is one in this brief essay, is simple. It was pronounced by sages centuries ago: 'If you wish for peace, prepare for war.' There are no short cuts to defence, as we found to our bitter cost in the years preceding 1962. As new threats emerge, we must raise the resources needed to meet them. This is not to say that we should become involved in an arms race. What it does mean is that there must be a constant review of the external threats to our security, of our national (and not merely Service) plans to meet them, and then orient and shape our defence mechanism accordingly. Growth in defence expenditure must not be viewed as an intolerable burden, or a strait jacket on national development but rather as an increase in the premium rate of accident or life insurance, for increase in risk cover. The alternative is loss of national freedom, no more and no less.

Innovative approach

K. R. SINGH

IT is important at the outset to define three key terms used in this article: detente, security and military planning. Detente can be broadly defined as the beginning of the easing of tension in international relations. Till recently, the term was used in the context of cold war rivalry between the super powers on a global level and now is being adopted in the context of relaxation of subsystemic rivalries also. The counterpoint of detente is entente. Both define the twilight zone separating conflictual and co-operative relationships among nation States, and it is difficult to define where detente ends and entente starts.

It is also difficult to envisage a situation in international relations

which is totally free from conflictual and, simultaneously, cooperative relationships. The degree and areas of conflict and co-operation may vary but neither can be ignored because it is possible to lead detente to its logical end, i.e., entente, only if we recognize the balance of conflictual and cooperative forces working at a particular juncture

Security, *per se*, has to be seen in the broader spectrum of territorial, systemic, i.e., political, economic and ideological security, beside military security. Thus, military security is only one aspect of national security. Also, what is commonly termed as military security is to be studied in the context of a nation's capacity to use force to safeguard or enhance what its ruling elite considers to be the national interest at a given time

Viewed in this context, military preparedness becomes one of the several variables in the interlinking forces that determine national power. Hence it has to be studied in the context of a balanced approach to the growth of national power and not as an end in itself, lest military capability, instead of providing security to the system, should start threatening it. Military preparedness has also to be seen in the context of detente politics. Precaution should be taken lest military preparedness in one country initiates a new spiral of conflictual approach in intra-regional politics, and thus acts as a constraint on detente

There is a need to analyse India's security from all angles and to determine the permissible limits of the use of force in safeguarding it. The data has to be interfaced with the need to maintain detente and if possible to convert it to entente and to see that military preparedness does not hamper the possibility of a new cooperative approach in intra-regional relations. In this connection, a distinction must be made between weapons acquisition and weapons planning. Weapons acquisition means that a country begs, borrows or buys weapons. The rate of growth of military capability in this case generally is very fast. Unrestricted weapons acquisition programme, by increa-

sing the threat posed by one State against another, can disturb the detente. But this scenario cannot be applied in case of military planning under which a country plans its weapons requirement in the light of its security requirements, and its political, economic and technological constraints

Also, there is a time-gap between military planning and military preparedness. The gap may be a few years or it may stretch to some decades depending upon the type of weapon systems planned. Hence, while weapon acquisition can disturb the detente, military planning, as defined above, has less chances of upsetting regional equilibrium

Thus, it can be said that India's security can best be studied only in the context of its national objectives. These objectives have to be defined within the framework of national constraints and assets. The use of force or military capability, plays an important part in fulfilling national objectives. Therefore, military capability has to be planned in keeping with national objectives, broad security needs and political, economic, technological and foreign policy constraints

Military planning takes into account immediate requirements, future needs and the impact of changing weapon systems. The question of immediate military requirements is governed by the geopolitical location as well as the regional and international politico-military environment. If it is conflictual, then the task of enhancing the nation's military capability gets priority. But if the trends are towards detente, then an undue emphasis upon rapid increase in military capability might retard the process of detente and thus indirectly affect the future security of the country

When one seeks to analyse the military capability of India one finds that India's army, (including reserves and para-military forces) totals about 13.3 lakhs.¹ It has about

1880 main battle tanks (MBT), 150 light tanks, 700 armoured personnel carriers (APC), more than 1000 artillery pieces of different calibre, unspecified number of Abbot self-propelled 105 mm guns, Tiger Cat and SAM-3 surface to air missiles (SAM), and SS-II anti-tank guided weapon (ATGW) mounted on jeep or helicopter. As opposed to that, Pakistan has an army totalling about five lakhs and a reserve of an equal number of men. Thus, as far as trained manpower is concerned India and Pakistan balance each other. Pakistan, however, is inferior in armour. It has about 1000 MBT, 50 light tanks, 400 APC, more than 1000 artillery pieces and unspecified number of Crotale SAMs and Cobra ATGWs

The manpower resources and reliance on towed artillery emphasize the reluctance on the part of both sides to give up the traditional tactics based upon overwhelming reliance on the infantry, both as a holding arm as well as striking arm. There are, however, new trends that point towards the formation of a new armour force capable of playing a role independent of the infantry. India has been planning a mix of MBT, APC, SP Gun, SP ATGW and mobile SAMs. At the moment, lack of a good self-propelled SAM is a serious gap in this mix. Pakistan does have a good S.P. SAM, the Crotale, but lacks an S.P. gun. It can be presumed that these gaps will be filled in the near future on both sides in the normal process of their efforts to update their weapon systems

This new combination points to a new trend. The strategy of traditional reliance on infantry as the holding arm as well as the striking arm is being discarded now by both the sides. Infantry would still remain the holding arm but armour force would represent the striking arm. Pakistan did try to adopt that method in 1965 and 1971, but failed because MBT alone cannot act efficiently against well defended positions. This was also demonstrated

¹ The details quoted in this article about military capability of India and

the neighbouring countries are drawn from *The Military Balance 1976-1977*, published by the Institute of Strategic Studies, London

in October 1973 in the Suez Sector. Thus, the armour force, based upon MBT, is being supported by APC, SP gun, and SP or mobile SAMs.

It is too early to say if India and Pakistan have solved other problems connected with mobile force, problems like logistics, maintenance, communication, command and control, etc. But there is no doubt that the use of armour force as a striking arm has brought about a basic change in the military environment in the subcontinent which will have an impact upon future military planning. This switchover from infantry to armour has been accepted by both India and Pakistan, and has not been made a focus of debate. It, therefore, gives one an impression that it is not an issue affecting the regional detente.

Whereas India and Pakistan have acquired a balance of mutual deterrence in land confrontation, India, at least so far as figures are concerned, has an edge over Pakistan in the field of air and naval deterrence.

The Pakistani Air Force has 217 combat aircraft. It has 15 B-57 B light bombers that are comparable to Indian Canberras, 28 Mirage III, 28 Mirage V, 80 MiG-19/F-6 and 60 F-86. Thus, it can use 15 B-57B and 28 Mirage V as deep penetration aircraft, 28 Mirage III and 80 MiG-19 as interceptor-fighters and 60 F-86 for ground attack role. It should, however, be noted that all fighter-interceptors can also be used for ground support role. There is a great deal of speculation about Pakistan drawing sophisticated aircraft from Islamic States, but in the light of India's friendly ties with these countries, it will be wrong to overestimate Pakistan's military capability by using that argument.

As compared to Pakistan, India has a superior airforce. It is based upon two main factors. Firstly, India's geopolitical compulsions force it to guard its air space not only on its western front but also all along the Himalayas. Secondly, India, by initiating the programme of manufacturing sophisticated aircraft has not only acquired technology but also has reduced several

constraints on weapons acquisition. Thus, it can go on adding to its air strength by utilizing its national resources. Pakistan cannot do so.

The total air strength of India is fairly impressive. It operates 950 combat aircraft. They include 80 Canberra B-58 light bombers, 130 Su-7 B, 80 HF-24, and 130 Hunter F 56 ground attack planes, and 275 MiG-21 and 250 Gnat MK I interceptors. Most of these planes are equal or superior to their counterparts in Pakistan, except Mirage III, which would have a marginal superiority. India can neutralize that qualitative superiority by its quantitative superiority in aircraft. The 1971 conflict between India and Pakistan has amply demonstrated India's air superiority over Pakistan. Since then there has been no basic change that should disturb that balance in the near future.

The same superiority is also self-evident in the naval sphere. Undoubtedly, Pakistan has a small but efficient navy. It operates one light cruiser-cum-training ship, four destroyers and four frigates. It has three Daphne class French submarines and three more are reportedly on order. Besides, it has a light force of 17 patrol boats, mostly of the Chinese origin. It is building an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability and has acquired two Sea King ASW helicopters and 3 Atlantic MR aircraft. Four Sea Kings are reportedly on order. Lack of antiship or anti-aircraft missiles in the Pakistani navy pose a big constraint to its operations beyond the sanctuary of its land-based air umbrella. The submarines are, therefore, the striking arm of the Pakistani navy. Daphne had proved its capability in 1971 by sinking an Indian anti-submarine frigate. If Pakistan increases its number of submarines from three to six, then it does pose a serious challenge to India because India does not have an ASW capability that is adequate enough to neutralize that threat.

The Indian navy is a more balanced force. Even if one discards the old and outdated surface vessels like the aircraft carrier, Vikrant, two light cruisers, and old destroyers

and frigates, India still retains a good striking arm based upon Leander-class frigates, Nanuchka-class corvettes and Osa-class fast petrol boats, that carry anti-ship or SAM missiles. Nanuchka carries both. This is buttressed by the ASW capability provided by 12 Alize, 3-II-38 and 3 Super Constellation MR aircraft, and 12 Sea King and several Alouette III ASW helicopters, besides the ASW equipment carried aboard surface vessels. Indian submarines also pose their own underwater threat.

An analysis of the naval balance between India and Pakistan, thus, shows very clearly the capability of each to hurt the other. The Pakistani navy cannot match the Indian navy in surface vessels because of the gap in missiles. India cannot defend itself fully from the underwater threat posed by Pakistani submarines. This threat is no longer confined to surface vessels alone but also applies to various fixed installations, especially oil installations, that would dot the Indian coast in the near future. They would be threatened not only by the conventional submarines like the Daphne, but more so by six SX-404 midget submarines that are tailored for commando operations. Since offshore oil installations are going to be an intrinsic part of India's security perimeter, their defence against attacks by surface vessels or by submarines or even by aircraft have to be seriously looked into by the military planners. Since these steps would be primarily defensive in nature they should not pose a serious challenge to the detente in the subcontinent.

Variables that determine India's military capability *vis-a-vis* China are different from those that influence Indo-Pakistani military balance. The geographical constraints affect direct military confrontation between the two most populous of the Asian States. The geographical distances from the heartland, inhospitable mountain terrain, logistic bottlenecks, etc., inhibit the use of large manpower resources as well as the use of heavy weapons like the armour except in a few select areas. Though the Chinese air force is very large, it is doubtful if it would be

really effective from bases on the periphery of India in view of the constraints due to geographical disadvantages and also the nature of its obsolete weapons. The Indian aircraft can match the Chinese in the limited conventional conflict if China does threaten the security of India. Thus, the conventional war scenario will be dominated by short, swift, mobile sweeps, followed by attempts at conflict resolution at political and diplomatic level.

The nuclear threat posed by China has also to be seen in its politico-military perspective. According to unofficial reports, China has a nuclear capability that can be classified as low-level in the context of the super powers, medium level in the context of big powers and high level in the context of nuclear threshold powers like India and Japan. The Chinese nuclear threat is represented not only by an ongoing nuclear weapon programme that includes search for an ICBM, but also by about two-to-three hundred nuclear warheads capable of being delivered by Tu-16 medium bombers, 600-700 mile medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM) and 1500-1750 mile intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM). All these weapon systems pose a nuclear threat to India and the Indian elite will have to take an appropriate political decision to meet this threat.

Thus, while assessing the military needs for the present and the immediate future, one comes to the conclusion that India does not need to add substantially to its military capability to counter the possible threat posed by the conventional weapons of Pakistan and China. Undoubtedly, a few gaps will have to be plugged like the self-propelled SAM for the armour force and the ASW capability to defend the long coast line and the oil installations in the economic zone. Since Pakistan already possesses excellent SP SAM like the French Crotale, acquisition of a similar weapon system by India should not be treated as a threat by Pakistan. ASW capability, whether of India or Pakistan, is primarily defence-oriented. Those weapon systems that are defence oriented rather than oriented

towards enhancing strike capability should be encouraged, especially under the compulsions of the regional detente.

When one seeks to analyse the future requirements of India one is faced with decision making on two levels: firstly, an accurate threat assessment and appropriate response and, secondly, the dilemma posed by weapons obsolescence. Both these factors need to be evaluated correctly because decisions taken on the basis of that date will affect the nation's security for decades.

Thus, when the decision-makers do assess the threat posed to India a decade hence how would they perceive India's security perimeter? Would they limit it to India's immediate neighbourhood or would they extend it to adjoining areas like the Gulf, the Indian Ocean, South East Asia and Central Asia? There is often a tendency to project a maximum threat, and to envisage a conflictual environment where India has to maintain its security in the face of tremendous politico-military constraints.

The biggest danger in working on such an hypothesis is that it would lead to an accelerated and massive weapons acquisition programme which would in its turn sow the seeds of an arms race in the region, thereby leading India and the neighbouring States into a spiral of conflictual relationship and thus threaten the security of the region. Hence, before the military planners decide to chalk out the framework of the future military capability, they ought to take into account the long-term security implications of an accelerated arms acquisition programme. The Iranians started such a spiral with the result that almost all countries in the Gulf have followed suit and today the Gulf region has more sophisticated arms per capita than any region with the possible exception of Israel, Syria and Egypt. Thus, no military planner can ignore the need to assess the threat accurately and to evolve an appropriate response which should be an amalgam of political, economic, diplomatic and military pressures rather than a military counter-threat *per se*.

Another factor which the military planners have to take note of constantly while planning for the future is the problem of obsolescence. A weapon becomes outdated and therefore needs to be replaced by a more up-to-date weapon. This gradual sophistication of weapons is a continuing process and armed forces have to be on guard lest they are inadequately equipped. This can be achieved by phasing out the old weapons and acquiring new weapons. For example, India phased out its Mystere IV planes and replaced them with Hunters, Marut and Su-7. This is a relatively easier process because more and more sophisticated weapons are produced and can be acquired.

The real problem arises when military planners are faced not only with the problem of obsolescence of a weapon but also with the obsolescence of the weapon system itself. The two are combined in the case of India. The Indian armed forces are equipped today with weapons some of which are not only old but are based upon outdated concepts. Take for example the tank, aircraft and cruisers. Not only does India possess twenty to thirty year old weapons like T-54/55 tanks, Canberra bombers and cruisers like INS Delhi and Mysore, but the concepts on which they were based have themselves become obsolete. The precision guided weapons (PGWs) have made them redundant.

The October war has very clearly shown that even the sophisticated weapons based upon these old concepts, the Phantom aircraft and M-61 tanks, were successfully neutralized by the first and second generation PGW, like the ATGW and SAMs. There is no doubt that in course of time when the lessons of the October war are properly assimilated, new platforms devised for these PGWs, and new tactics evolved on the basis of the PGWs as the core weapon, the new weapon systems based upon the new concepts are bound to emerge as the dominant force.

The process of this rethinking in systemic modification has already started and, even by conservative estimates, the coming decade would

witness a massive induction of these new weapon systems in the armed forces all over the world. The new scenario, therefore, poses a major problem before the Indian military planners. Do they opt for a more sophisticated weapon within the framework of an old weapon system or do they plan for a switchover to the newly evolving weapon systems based upon the new concepts of precision guidance? In other words, do they replace the Canberra with a new so-called deep penetration strike aircraft (DPSA) or a multi-role combat aircraft (MRCA), and repeat this modification in all spheres of the Indian armed forces, thereby committing India's defence forces to a certain type of weapon and, therefore, strategy for at least two decades to come, or else take a pause and weigh the balance between sophisticating a given weapon system that is gradually becoming redundant, and adopting a new weapon system that is emerging as the future trend setter. The present military balance between India and its neighbouring countries and the growing detente on the subcontinent gives an opportunity to Indian planners to pause before they take the decisive plunge.

Thus, one of the main tasks before the military planners in India is to choose between the conservative approach and the innovative approach. The conservative approach would mean retaining the concepts on which the present weapons and tactics are based, and the sophistication would be within the framework of that concept. The innovative approach would mean reorienting military capability on new concepts which are, broadly speaking, grouped under 'electronic warfare'. Both these approaches have their advantages and disadvantages that need to be evaluated properly before the country's security is committed for decades to come.

The conservative approach has some obvious advantages. It does not disturb the *status quo* so far as the personnel, training, weapon system, etc., are concerned. The new weapons being added are, therefore, easily assimilated. But this has serious disadvantages

Since the new weapons being added have almost reached the peak of their sophistication, they tend to be very expensive. Thus, a replacement of Mig-21 would be thrice as expensive.

In other words, the cost of modernization all along would be, on an average, three times the cost of the present weapons. This cost can be justified if the new weapons would guarantee military security for two decades. But the lessons of the October war and the series of new experiments in PGWs do not guarantee that these ultra-sophisticated weapons would survive in the new type of electronic battlefield that military planners envisage in the future. These weapons are threatened by what can be called systemic obsolescence. Thus, to invest huge sums of money in a weapon system that has become obsolete does not provide military security for the future.

Another factor to be kept in mind while planning to acquire these sophisticated weapons is its possible impact upon the newly emerging detente in the subcontinent. Acquisition of new deep penetration aircraft like the Mirage F-1 or Jaguar by India is bound to increase Pakistani threat perception. One has to go back to the outcry in India when Pakistan was hoping to acquire 110 relatively old A-7 aircraft.

Thus, the immense military expenditure for the modernization of the weapons under the conservative approach cannot be justified economically, militarily and politically. The disadvantages far outweigh the only advantage it has, systemic continuity.

The innovative approach to military planning also needs careful scrutiny. The three core concepts, precision guidance, assured lethality and high degree of mobility, which have become operational due to recent researches in electronics, missile technology and miniaturization, have dealt a blow to old concepts based upon the size of the warhead, high rate of fire and heavy armour protection.

At the moment, some of the new PGWs, based upon the new con-

cept, have been put on the old weapons platform. A long-range anti-ship missile on a relatively slow and bulky surface vessel, or SAM on tank chassis are some of the examples of these hybrid weapon systems. In most of these cases, the weapons platforms do not match the ethos of the weapon system. It must be remembered that mobility is one of the key components of the triad on which the new weapon system is based. For best results, the PGWs have to be provided not only with faster platforms like aircraft, helicopters, hovercraft and surface skimmers, but also better means of data acquisition, analysis, command and control. All this means a major change in the military set-up of the country.

The major constraints in switching over from the conservative to the innovative approach, especially for countries with medium and low level technology, are the relatively high cost per unit of the warhead, high level of technology involved in the production of these weapon systems and trained manpower needed to produce, maintain and man them. Not all these constraints are insurmountable, especially for a country like India.

Despite the high unit cost of the warheads, the system is relatively cheaper because of the one-shot hit capability of the PGWs. Also, the unit cost of the weapon system is less when compared to the weapon system of the conservative approach against which they are pitted. For example, SAMs and ATGWs are far cheaper than the aircraft or the tanks against whom they are to be used. Another advantage of the innovative approach is the feasibility of mounting these weapons on relatively fast platforms so that mobility increases and fire power can be concentrated at a desired point within a short time. This saves the cost of replacing these weapons in fixed positions all over the country, besides reducing the total number of weapons needed to maintain the optimum military capability.

India will be investing about 1500 to 2000 crores of rupees in buying

a single weapon like the DPSA under the conservative approach. Other arms also need to be modernized. Blue prints are being drawn for new MBT, APC, submarine, frigate etc. All these would cost money. Thus, the total cost of modernization of the Indian armed forces would run into thousands of crores of rupees. These new weapons run the risk of being knocked out by the PGWs, as happened in October 1973. Thus, the huge investment does not guarantee military security. Even a fraction of this amount, to be spent under the conservative approach, can lay the foundation for the innovative approach.

India has an infra-structure of trained manpower capable of handling not only the research and development (R & D) in this field, but also the manufacture of these weapons. Thus, an input in core fields like the laser, T V. infra-red (IR), missile technology, computers, metallurgy, etc., will not only pave the way for new weapons but will generate a spin off in the civilian use that will more than compensate the amount of money spent in the R & D in this field.

Undoubtedly, total reliance on indigenous R & D would be time consuming and hence a simultaneous programme to buy and to manufacture weapon systems with high percentage of new innovations can be suggested both as a stop-gap arrangement and also as a way of learning the new technology. Many of these new weapons are being marketed. Arrangements should be made to manufacture some of them under licence in India. Immediate efforts should, therefore, be made to acquire those advanced weapons and weapon technologies.

Laser range finders, laser designers, forward-looking infra-red, anti-radiation missile shoulder-fired SAM (Blow pipe) with radio-command guidance and proximity fuse, laser guided Swedish SAM etc., are best suited to a country like India for investing its scarce financial resources rather than in out-moded systems like DPSA, however sophisticated they might be. In the

interim period, these weapons can be used along with the available weapons till a proper switchover is affected.

The innovative approach has certain political advantages also. Since it does not immediately increase the military capability of India, it does not disturb the regional military balance and, consequently, ought not to disturb the regional detente. Secondly, the PGWs are best suited for defensive tactics and hence do not pose a threat to other countries. SAM and ATGW are weapons capable of defeating airforce and armour and halting aggression but they cannot win wars or occupy territories by themselves. Thus, even from the perspective of long-term planning in the subcontinent, these weapons would pose less of a threat to the neighbouring countries than the weapons like tanks and bombers.

Lastly, the new weapons would be in tune with the new socio-technological ethos of India. At the moment, the personnel of the armed forces find it difficult to get absorbed in civilian life after they leave the armed forces. They do not get opportunities to put their military training to the optimum use in civilian life. But, under the innovative approach the trained manpower released from the armed forces would be an asset to the nation and could participate in the technical and industrial growth of India. Hence, military service would practically become a training period before the youth in India gets settled in life.

All these economic, social, political and military advantages of the innovative approach to military planning far outweigh the current military planning. And, today, when India has to choose between the old weapon system and a new one, between regional detente and regional conflict, between an aggressive and defensive posture and between an anachronistic colonial army and a new army in keeping with the national ethos and the overall security of the country, there is no choice but to opt for the innovative approach to military planning.

The pragmatic approach

S N ANTIA

*'Peace is the dream of the wise —
war is the history of man', (Arab
Proverb)*

IN India there is an articulate section of the intelligentsia (within and outside the media) which advocates that now since a mini-detente has developed between India and its neighbours, Pakistan and China, we should take a serious look at the social and economic costs of our military establishment. They also believe that a low military profile by India will ensure stabilisation of friendly relations more rapidly, instil confidence and reassure our neighbours as well as halt or, if not, at least minimise the escalation of an arms race on the subcontinent. This will also eliminate interested external manipulations and the countries of the region can attend to the urgent tasks of economic development and social uplift of their people.

There are others in the defence services and amongst politicians who expound the theory of 'balance of power' and India's likely position as a ranking power or potential world power in the Indian Ocean region. There are yet others who advocate the forging of regional alliances, particularly a nuclear-free zone, one outside the NPT regime, under India's leadership. These are divergent and conflicting viewpoints and perhaps not in consonance with our political philosophy, national interests, as well as mature security considerations under the prevailing political and military strategic environment.

In matters of national security, there is no place for an emotional approach nor, for that matter, does ideology or prejudice have a role to play. The sole aim is our national interest. Neither the acquisition of modern armaments, the expansion and modernisation of

defence production nor the abundance of manpower are the only means to ensure national security. We must supplement these with an astute and pragmatic foreign policy which ensures us the maximum dividends.

National security cannot be formulated or evaluated in isolation. It must take into account the geographical location of the nation, a foreign policy in which our security needs are invariably taken into account, political and military strategic profile, the threats to our security as envisaged now or in the future, as well as the whole gamut of our national resources which must include financial and material resources, economic and industrial potential, scientific and technological advancement, communications and transportation and manpower resources. Last, but not the least, the maintenance of national morale and motivation. Only then will a pragmatic approach in evolving a national security posture emerge. This is not a static or one-time concept, it must be reviewed, modified and updated taking into account the changing scenario and fluctuating situations as they arise.

In the light of the above and notwithstanding the process of detente now in progress, how should the development of our armed forces take place both qualitatively and quantitatively, keeping uppermost our national interests in view?

Geography has placed India in a strategically pivotal role in the middle of the littoral States around the Indian Ocean with the countries of Africa, Arab countries, Gulf States, Iran and Pakistan on one side and Bangladesh, Burma, the South-East Asian countries, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, on the other. The existing status or the future development of our armed forces cannot and should not be considered within the narrow confines of threats emanating from China and Pakistan alone, but also must take into consideration the overall compulsions and impact of our strategic geographical location in relation to countries and their posture and attitudes on both the flanks of the Indian Ocean, con-

sidered vital to our own security environment. Free from tensions in the past, the Indian Ocean area has now assumed considerable importance in the great power global strategy.

The Middle East area with its vast oil resources and energy reserves — now a potent instrument of diplomacy — the arming of the Arab and Gulf States, Iran and Pakistan, by the super powers, France, UK and China, the Arab-Israeli confrontation and the role of the super powers to establish their sphere of influence in this region — which also affects the security of southern Europe, the importance of the reopening of the Suez Canal as a strategic international waterway and the recent events in the Horn of Africa must have a strong impact on our overall security considerations.

On the other side of the Indian Ocean, besides the great powers, China too is keen, anxious and determined to exert her political and economic influence on the emerging nations of Asia and Africa. The impact of this on our maritime threat from China, remote as it may seem today, is real and should not be dismissed lightly. The Chinese-inspired coup in Indonesia in 1965 and in Sri Lanka in 1971 are a reminder to India of this threat.

In the context of India's overall security environment, amongst all the neighbouring countries only two pose the threat of military aggression. These are China and Pakistan.

After the 1962 India-China conflict over the border issue, the threat from China along our north and north-eastern frontiers is one of low profile. By and large, the frontiers have remained quiet. This is mainly due to the Chinese pre-occupation with strengthening their occupation of the Tibetan region. China has also been preoccupied with ideological and military confrontation with the Soviet Union and faced with internal upheavals due to the Cultural Revolution, the struggle for succession and army purges. During this period, China has been content with stoking the fires of

'wars of national liberation' in Asia and Africa, incitement of guerillas in the India-Burma common borders, support of rebel activity in Burma as well as to the Nagas and Mizos in India. Even the vexed question of annexation of Taiwan, by force has been temporarily shelved.

Its detente with her one-time arch enemy, the USA is designed to counter the growing Soviet political and military influence on a global level. The present regime, in spite of Mao's dictum, is in the process of modernising its industry as well as the armed forces to match the Soviet military might. In so far as it relates to her immediate neighbours, China has now accorded high priority to mending her fences with them. The process has already started in Burma and Nepal and is soon to be followed up with India. China proposes to seek and secure her southern frontiers, the approaches to Tibet and Sinkiang, both peopled by restless minorities, by cultivating good neighbourly relations rather than belligerence.

In China's appraisal of South Asia, the image of India figures prominently. It seeks to temper India's stature in the region by creating counterweights, hence Pakistan is its favourite and Bangladesh may well follow suit. In the larger context, it expects that India will not develop anything like a military alliance with the Soviet Union despite the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty and it is always on guard against any Soviet move to encircle from the south with Indian participation. The main dispute with India is over the delineation of Sino-Indian borders and the vacation of the 15,000 square miles of Indian territory.

We have already recognised China's occupation of Tibet, but the areas of Aksai Chin through which run the lines of Chinese communications to Sinkiang and Southern China, strategically so vital to China for her security needs, the Chinese will find extremely difficult to concede in the quest of an overall normalisation of relations with India. This is an issue of national importance to both the countries and so long as it remains

unresolved, relations with China can never be on an even keel and the process of normalisation will remain incomplete. In that case the threat from China will still remain

The major threat to India's security is from Pakistan. Without going into the genesis of her bitter animosity and hostility towards India — it has its roots in the historical background of events prior to and after Partition — the main issue between the two countries is regarding the status of Kashmir. Pakistan's three major attempts to annex Kashmir by force have been unsuccessful and she feels frustrated and desperate about the Kashmir issue which is self-generated.

Apart from being armed to an extent beyond her size and influence on the sub-continent by the USA under guise of Pakistan's membership of SEATO and CENTO, and in spite of the military reverses in the 1971 war and dismemberment of her eastern wing, militarily Pakistan today still poses a strong threat to India. Pakistan still continues to receive substantial military aid from the USA notwithstanding the Carter Administration's assurance to India that the 'tilt' had been corrected.

In addition, she has been aided considerably in military hardware by her political and military ally, China, as well as some Arab States, Iran and other Muslim nations. Now that she no longer has any responsibility in the East, she has been able to concentrate her full military potential in the west. Like China, Pakistan is also in occupation of Indian territory in Kashmir. No political and military leadership in Pakistan, including the mercurial Bhutto, has or ever will be able to mould Pakistani public opinion towards a rapprochement over Kashmir.

Up to 1971, India's defence posture was mainly confined to her land frontiers and the maritime threats to her security were never given the seriousness they deserved. Our pivotal geographical location, the strategic importance of our island territories, the newly enacted Law of the Sea, the extension of our

limits of territorial waters to two hundred miles and the security of our vital off-shore assets has now added a new dimension to our maritime threat. These have increased the navy's operational responsibilities considerably. This of course is in addition to keeping our sea lanes of communication open both during peace and war and our vast coastline on the flanks of our mainland free from enemy interference.

Although in 1971 we did inflict a crushing blow to the Pakistan Navy and practically made it inoperative, paradoxically it seems that the 1971 war has strengthened rather than weakened the Pakistan navy. Now free from its eastern commitments, it has acquired patrol craft, missile boats, ASW helicopters, Whitby-class frigates from the UK, submarines from France and China and is now able to concentrate its complete naval effort in the Arabian Sea area. It is possible that naval craft from Iran and the Gulf States may come to Pakistan's aid during hostilities to harass India's commercial shipping as well as serve as warning stations leaving the Pakistan navy free for offensive action. It must be appreciated that the 1965 and 1971 wars must have convinced Pakistan of the futility of achieving any gains against India's western land frontiers or the impossibility of doing so in the next round. It is therefore the Navy upon which Pakistan is now depending to capture strategic initiative.

The air threat is common to the three services in varying degrees of importance. These will involve pre-emptive strikes against airfields à la Israel. There will be strikes on troop and armour concentrations, military installations and naval and other shipping in the harbours or near at sea. In the past we have been fortunate to ward off air attacks from the enemy on our vital industrial complexes and communications network. These threats will have to be met by the IAF as well as by the other two services within their own air defence potential.

During the 1971 war, we were not able to fully destroy Pakistan's air potential due to lack of deep penetration aircraft as well as the

fact that the Pakistan air force, in spite of having more modern and sophisticated planes, remained battle-shy to take a more positive offensive role. Now freed from its commitments in the eastern wing, the Pakistan air force will form a strong single entity in the western sector. It has acquired more planes and missiles and can also depend upon the support of the Arab States as well as Iran not only to replace the aircraft lost in battle, but also for actual participation by their pilots in air battles. Pakistan air force pilots have actually been assisting some of the Arab States in the Arab-Israeli conflict and they are now assisting Somali forces. Thus, they have been able to acquire combat training and latest techniques on modern and sophisticated air-craft which are likely to be made available to Pakistan in the event of a war with India.

As regards the air threat from China, this will materialise from its forward airfields in the Tibet region. Apart from strikes on troop concentrations, its air effort will be confined mainly to our eastern industrial belt, communications centres and network and ports and harbours. In the event of a war with Pakistan, the Chinese reluctance in the past to interfere physically in aid of Pakistan is no criterion for ignoring this joint threat in our planning for air defence.

Keeping in view the above broad assessment of India's strategic location around the Indian Ocean, and the likely threats to her security from Pakistan and China as well as sources which directly or indirectly will render assistance during hostilities, how will all these fit into our foreign policy posture?

We have a nationally and internationally accepted foreign policy of non-alignment, non-interference in other nations' internal affairs and a philosophy of co-existence based on the principles of Panchsheel. Yet, it has to be acknowledged that this is no guarantee against aggression by a neighbour who is not similarly minded but persistently inimical, as Pakistan is. Therefore, our security posture compels us to prepare for war. In any future

political settlement with China and Pakistan, the pledge given to the nation by the Parliament that every inch of our lost territory will be recovered, must loom large. This pledge still remains unfulfilled. Recent statements by the Prime Minister have indicated that India does not wish to settle the border issue with China by force. This assumes the same with regard to Kashmir.

Normalisation of relations with both Pakistan and China sans the recovery of our lost territories will not eliminate the main causes of our disputes nor will it in any case diminish or lessen our security posture. The status quo will not remove the basic cause for continued hostility. In any political dialogue with China on the border issue, India's close and friendly relations with the Soviet Union are bound to figure prominently and are likely to be the key factor in Chinese negotiations.

We have seen from the discussions of security threats from China of her apprehensions about the Indo-Soviet Treaty and any likely military alliance or coordination of effort by the USSR in posing a military threat with Indian participation. To what extent, if any, then are we prepared to accommodate the Chinese or are willing to modify our posture of friendship and ties with the Soviet Union? India has maintained that any settlement or normalisation of relations with China will not be at the expense of our friendship with the Soviet Union. Yet, one cannot shake off the impression that in the context of our overall national interests perhaps there could be a price-tag attached to Indo-Soviet friendship.

Likewise, Pakistan will not opt for any settlement on the Kashmir issue until the Chinese attitude is known as here too their strategic interests converge in regard to the road which links Tibet with Sinkiang, passing through Kashmir and built with Sino-Pak collusion. The other disturbing factor in our foreign policy in the context of our security against Pakistan is our inability to mould Arab opinion. In spite of India championing the Arab cause against Israel consistent-

ly for the last three decades, it is quite clear that Pakistan is not without influence and that the brotherhood of Islam does not take India's sensibilities into account in her posture against Pakistan in peace and war.

At the national level, the price we pay for meeting the existing threats and the threats visualised to maintain our territorial integrity and security posture is a paltry Rs 2700 crores in monetary terms and approximately 3.6 to 3.7% of our Gross National Product. This small cost for national security enables us to function and live under a democratic dispensation and our deep concern to strive for the economic and social development of the nation. Yet the government gives us the impression of being apologetic about our defence expenditure as if we have some kind of a guilty conscience to justify the spending in terms of national security whereas in reality we should be spending two to three times more as a matter of right to ensure that we do have real military stability and not a perceived one.

There are critics who claim that India must recognise Pakistan's sense of military vulnerability and dependence on outside supply of arms. This is not a valid argument. Pakistan's defence expenditure ratio to GNP is 7 to 8%. This does not take into account the massive military aid she received from the USA in the past and is still receiving. This is also apart from the economic aid she has been receiving from various sources. In addition, the Arab countries have been very generous to her by giving financial backing to purchase military hardware. India has offered Pakistan a 'no-war' pact on more than one occasion which has been spurned. Surely here was a golden opportunity for her if she genuinely felt a sense of vulnerability to have accepted India's gesture.

Our armed forces' existing capability based on the present force structure is one of defensive posture with limited offensive capabilities. The deployment of the army's mountain divisions against the Chinese threat is defensive with

only local offensive capability. The strength of the infantry and armoured formations on the western front is more or less at par with that of the Pakistan army. These formations too have a limited offensive capability which precludes any decisive military outcome.

The navy's capabilities with its considerably increased responsibilities is woefully inadequate both in its force structure as well as in the realm of fleet composition, comprising ageing ships and craft and lacking the requisite mobility and punch in armament. Its amphibious capabilities, in conjunction with the army to undertake combined operations to the threats posed to our island territories, is almost non-existent.

The IAF as a single entity is naturally offensively oriented, yet equipped with outdated aircraft to exploit fully its offensive potential against the more modern and sophisticated air force which Pakistan now possesses. It is no consolation that IAF pilots have rendered yeoman service and displayed rare combat courage in the past against Pakistan's sophisticated aircraft to prove that it is the man behind the machine that counts most. Yet, there is a limit to this type of human courage, endurance and combat efficiency. The air force's capability will have to be increased substantially to meet the threats. Our surface to air missile system as well as our early warning systems are not fully responsive to our existing needs. The air defence on the ground which is the responsibility of the army needs considerable augmentation to cover adequately and effectively the vulnerable areas and vulnerable points. We have little or no capacity to cater for low-level air offensive action by the enemy as there is a gap in our air defence between the SAM system and the L70-gun air defence system.

The role and capabilities of the indigenous defence production within the framework of our national security considerations is no less important. To state that this important adjunct to our security apparatus is managed through State

capitalism for a captive arms market is not to appreciate the full significance of its effect on the totality of our national security considerations. Some countries who have solely relied on the supply of military hardware from the great powers and have been largely dependent on the political patronage of their donors (our neighbour Pakistan is one of them), understand fully well that this type of military aid can be slowed down or discontinued, including the supply of essential spares required during combat, depending on the pressures generated and weight of world opinion at the time of hostilities.

Therefore, our indigenous defence production capability has ensured for us an uninterrupted supply of arms, ammunition and varied types of stores and equipment during an emergency. Egypt, Pakistan, and, recently, Somalia have learnt to their bitter cost and experience what it means by not having a strong indigenous production capability to support their war effort. No country can be cent per cent self-sufficient in military hardware and India is no exception. Although we have, over the past two decades, made reasonably satisfactory progress, we have yet to go a considerably long way to fully satisfy our fighting forces' requirements. In this connection, our R & D effort too needs to be stepped up enormously and coordinated with the production effort.

This, in sum, is the broad spectrum of our security posture under the prevailing environment and within the limits imposed by fiscal resources to meet our varied security threats. It would be totally naive to presume, as some critics do, that over the years India has built up a military-industrial complex which is geared not to the strategic environment but to manpower and hardware, and that this giant state of bureaucracy is loath to consider reductions in force levels or restraint on weapons production.

We must also remember two important aspects in regard to our military capabilities — that the scale of our preparations must be such that even in a defensive pos-

ture, offensive preparations must be given the highest rating in our priorities if we have to obtain decisive military results during combat. The second is that we must combine sophistication and quality of our equipment with adequate numbers. Only then will we be able to achieve real military capability which will infuse a sense of sanity amongst the hawks across our borders and, in turn, make detente meaningful.

Is the nation in general and the armed forces in particular fully satisfied that in the realm of national security we have real military strength and stability so that our adversaries fully understand our military posture? Have we got the necessary force structure and the wherewithal to fulfil our tasks or what more needs to be done to improve our capabilities to the extent we desire?

The armed forces of India are made up of professional soldiers, sailors and airmen. We have learnt from experience of the past wars with China and Pakistan that future conflicts too are likely to be of short duration but of great intensity. There will be, therefore, no time for general mobilisation or the call-up of reservists to act as reinforcements to replace the wastages inherent in war. All this takes time and, frankly, we just do not have a rapid and effective mobilisation system on the Israeli pattern to really influence the outcome of a conflict.

At the same time, big power pressures, UN intervention and other forms of coercion manifest themselves rapidly to end hostilities and to effect a cease-fire. It is, therefore, imperative that our force structure is such that we must be at peak strength at the commencement of hostilities to achieve decisive results before international opinion exerts itself or outside powers interfere by proxy to bring about a truce — only to prepare for the next round.

Since we are not going to fight a war of national liberation like Viet Nam, we have to be fully ready and prepared since the initiative for an attack rests with the other side. To maintain and sustain a large

standing armed force in our conditions is not to forget its purpose.

With the posture of threat from China which has been discussed earlier, the mountain divisions' quantum of force structure needs no drastic changes in the environment they operate or are likely to operate. Only when normalisation of relations with China takes place, can a draw-down of the mountain divisions be contemplated. Settlement or normalisation of relations notwithstanding, on no account can our borders with China be left inadequately guarded as prior to 1962.

In our future development perspective, there is however a strong compulsion to increase the strength of infantry divisions by a minimum of an army corps as well as another armoured division on the western front to comprise an armoured corps formation to operate in conjunction with an infantry division made fully mobile with APCs. This will ensure our maintaining combat superiority, greater fire power and mobility potential to avoid the military stalemate of the past as experienced during the 1965 and 1971 wars.

To state that instead of increasing the present strength of infantry divisions we could switch over some of the mountain divisions is militarily unsound. Without anti-tank capability as well as lack of mobility when operating in the plains, the necessary impact on our combat potential at that time cannot be made. Our anti-tank capability needs to be augmented in great measure by the introduction of the latest generation of precision-guided missiles as well as by having sufficient helicopter resources with anti-tank capabilities. Cost-effectiveness-wise, the PGMs will pay off great dividends for additional tank strength as well as in the destruction of enemy armour. The effectiveness of the PGMs have been well demonstrated during the Yom-Kippur war. The necessity for a fully mechanised army corps has been well illustrated during the 1971 war. We just could not exploit the strategic and tactical initiative in the Rajasthan desert and effectively threaten Pakistan's western flank, due to lack of requisite combat

organisation, mobility and fire-power.

The army must have its integral air component which is really responsive to its strategic and tactical needs. Undoubtedly, the concept of vertical envelopment by the use of fixed wing or helicopter-borne forces enhances the strategic and tactical mobility of the army. It places the army on the threshold of a bold new approach in conducting a land battle with greater mobility. It exploits the principles of war, viz, surprise and economy of effort, at the right place and the right time to an unprecedented degree. It is, therefore, vital for the army to establish its own army-aviation potential notwithstanding the professional differences with the IAF on this account.

This is more important when viewed in the context of strategy on our western sector where land battles in the traditional military concept have produced negative results, due to preponderance of defence measures taken by both sides. The value of the army aviation corps in river-crossing operations by exploiting the vertical envelopment concept is tremendous in terms of time, space and effort.

The navy's development programme must surely receive high priority within the overall scheme both in the size of its force structure and modernisation of its fleet which enhances greater mobility, striking capability and effective anti-submarine measures. There is a school of thought which believes that the era of aircraft carriers or capital ships has long passed and no longer serves the needs of our navy. This is not a correct assessment of the navy's important role, the increased threats it has to encounter and the importance and magnitude of its combat responsibilities. The aircraft carrier must not only be retained because of its crucial role in naval combat strategy, but it must have the most modern and sophisticated aircraft and be fully supported by the shore-based air arm of the navy and the IAF to help in combat missions.

Capital man-of-wars are necessary to operate in all types of seas

and in all weather conditions and their size and tonnage must provide mobility, a stable platform to fully exploit fire power potential and other fighting capabilities both against naval and armed merchant fleet as well as naval and port installations. The smaller ships of the type of missile craft will provide the necessary close support to augment the fire-power of the capital ships as well as opportunity and other targets to achieve surprise at sea as well as shore installations.

The role of the submarines as an offensive weapon is obvious and here too there is need to augment its numbers to cover the vast area which has now become the operational responsibility of the navy. In view of Pakistan's submarine build-up we must also go in for a greater anti-submarine war effort. The naval fleet must have a balanced force structure which ensures the necessary flexibility for task force groupings and regroupings as situations demand. In view of its commitments and the inherent dangers in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and Gulf regions, the navy's force structure needs to be almost doubled and its fleet modernised with the latest type of ships, greater fire-power potential as well as ASW capabilities

The IAF too needs considerable modernisation. The Gnats, the Hunters, the Canberras and some older and outdated generation of transport and helicopter fleet needs instant replacement as their span of combat-worthiness no longer matches that of the Pakistan air force. The replacement of the Canberras by a long range strike aircraft can no longer be delayed. There is an unnecessary controversy as to its requirement and its combat role. The acquisition of this type of aircraft is not something new which has cropped up overnight nor is it by any standards aimed at an arms race. This requirement has been under discussion for nearly a decade and a final decision cannot be delayed any longer

Firstly, it is a replacement for an older type of military hardware and secondly it must take into serious

consideration the compulsions of the air threats as well as our combat posture as a whole and the operational necessity for the air force to strengthen its offensive capability. The DPSA is one of the means to achieve this. The 45-squadron air force structure need not be augmented provided modern types of sophisticated aircraft are introduced in service to replace the older types. However, the composition of the squadrons needs review to ensure that the combat ratio is much higher than that of the transport and helicopter fleet.

In the realm of surface-to-air guided missiles a new generation is required to replace the existing SAMs. The paucity of air defence resources on the ground to augment the L-70 guns air defence system brooks no delay as we must fully protect our vital industrial complexes. It is also vital to design and develop or to purchase, off the shelf, a low-level SAM of the British 'Rapier' type — a highly mobile computerised air defence system — for use in the field to fill in the gaps between the high level SAMs and the L-70 gun air defence systems.

Let us be under no illusion that our indigenous defence production is equal to all our requirements. Even without the modernisation programme, to keep our forces in trim as well as equipped, imports must be at least three to four fold of the value of the present level of production.

We have many gaps to fill in our naval and air force design and manufacturing and armament programmes. Our electronic industrial base with defence oriented impact is still in its primitive stage to achieve the degree of sophistication which a modern fighting machine requires. Our armour and artillery production needs considerable augmentation, particularly tanks and armoured personnel carriers and field and medium guns with longer ranges as well as ground to ground missiles like rockets and PMGs. Even in the field of ammunition there are critical gaps.

This is not to suggest that the indigenous defence production has

not played its requisite part in the gamut of national security considerations. But it needs to modernise its technology and operational efficiency to keep production at peak level in close and effective coordination with the three services as well as the national R & D effort which, too, is woefully inadequate and bereft of progressive outlook and a sense of pragmatism. The main distortion in our indigenous defence production lies in the fact that in the past the government, as a matter of policy, deliberately confined defence production activities in the so-called defence sector without taking into account the totality of security considerations or the totality of our national economic and industrial potential. We have, therefore, so far failed to make the maximum use of our opportunities in terms of time, production levels and in modernisation and sophistication.

There is a move afoot now to correct this, but unless this is fully integrated at national level without any mental reservations, we will not be able to achieve more positive and tangible results. It must be understood that the armed forces must have a continuous and even flow of defence armaments and equipment, both during peace and war and, therefore, the integration of the indigenous defence industrial potential at national level must be viewed and undertaken without delay.

The future expansion of our armed forces, the process of modernisation and augmentation of indigenous production effort, will entail large investments. These can be spread over the next decade so as to minimise its overall effect on the national fiscal, economic and industrial perspective. Yet, it would be incorrect to assume that this will be at the expense of economic or social growth, or that weaponry has overwhelmed the peacock as some critics describe. Such investment would be instrumental in generating an economy which will work out to many times more the amount of investment. This will also generate

employment opportunities but, most essential, it will create an infrastructure for a sound future modernised and sophisticated industrial base. A sense of participation at national level in our security endeavour will ensure a high morale and motivation amongst our citizens.

The armed forces are trained for war in peace time. This implies that the force structure must be built up, maintained and suitably equipped and trained to meet any contingency across the borders. Unfortunately, in peace time the defence services are hamstrung by a three-tier control, viz., ministerial, secretarial and financial. It is the latter particularly which tends to put a stranglehold over the rapid progress and build-up of the armed forces in peace time for preparing them for their combat role. It is too late when an emergency is upon us to sanction all proposals on files. New units and formations cannot be raised overnight, equipped and trained in a short time to make them fully fit for combat. The suggested development of the armed forces must not therefore be delayed for want of an understanding of the implications of national security of which the armed forces are an instrument to fulfil national aims and objectives.

In so far as it relates to the nuclear threat, India's nuclear policy is correct from all aspects. In the given circumstances, there is no nuclear threat from China. The government realises that the Chinese nuclear threat is more political than military. China would most probably avoid a nuclear confrontation with India. The existing Sino-Soviet relationships and the possibility of nuclear retaliation will preclude any Chinese attempts to upgrade her conventional war posture.

As regards Pakistan, this is a hypothetical question at present. The resistance of the nuclear powers to further nuclear proliferation is growing and to what extent Pakistan will be able to circumvent the safeguards to use nuclear energy for military purposes will have to be closely watched. Political, economic and other international

pressures may deter Pakistan from acting irrationally in this regard. There is no need for India to seek a nuclear umbrella and, if such an umbrella is provided for in the Indo-Soviet Treaty, it will only deter China and Pakistan to be wary of the danger that may confront them.

There is also no reason whatsoever for India to assume any leadership of a nuclear-free zone alliance as this is not according to our philosophy or national interests. The theory of 'balance of terror' or nuclear blackmail is outdated and without any validity. No one has yet resorted to such blackmail, nor is there any possibility in the future of doing so. In an era of detente, the main theme now is to reduce international tension.

While India desires peace and wants to live in peace, in the light of our post-Independence history, on no account can we be complacent about our national security with all its ramifications. We must therefore view the future development of our armed forces even in a situation of detente in its proper and pragmatic perspective and ensure that, should a threat develop to our territorial integrity, it be met effectively with all the resources at our command. Our approach to economic and social development must not blur our security vision nor must it ever create an atmosphere of the pre-1962 era.

We owe this not only to the present generation but also to the future generations of our countrymen. In international affairs there is no permanent hate or love relationship, nor can national emotions or jingoism take precedence over mature reasoning, restraint and the pragmatic approach which best serves our national interests. It is to be hoped that the spirit of detente now being developed between India and China and Pakistan will replace an era of animosity and hostility by that of friendship and good neighbourliness.

'Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it' — George Santayana

Taming our power

BHARAT WARIAVWALLA

INDIA towers over all her subcontinental neighbours in size, population, resources and technology. Our overwhelming preponderance is a reality that cannot be altered, obscured or even concealed, by a diplomacy, however adroit, by a military posture, however low. But what we can do is to use this preponderance in a way to construct a sub continent in which conflicts between us and our neighbours are kept way below the flash point. And eventually it is not at all unrealistic to think, as I shall later argue, of a subcontinent in which conflicts have given way to a measure of co-operation. But, for all this to happen we have to, as the Biblical phrase goes, put away childish things.

One should laud the Janata Government for putting away the childish but seriously entertained notion of India playing a big bro-

ther role in the subcontinent. In what seems to be a major government pronouncement no foreign policy, Vajpayee recently said in Hyderabad that India wants no such role. But the Foreign Minister has done more than merely say so. The fifteen years old Farakka Barrage dispute has now been resolved by an act of our generosity. Gone now is the niggling insistence by both on how many cusecs should each get of the Ganga waters. Dacca may not appreciate this but the military dictatorship there will now have one less anti-India issue on which to rally the people. With Kathmandu we have signed the separate treaties of trade and transit, as the Nepalese have wanted. Finally, to demonstrate to a nation who needs the greatest demonstration of India's sincerity, Vajpayee paid a visit to Pakistan. The talks on the Salal project will now begin,

as also, I hope, the Indo-Pakistan cricket contest.

By playing down one's strength and refusing to translate it into coercive diplomacy is one way — surely a more democratic way — of assuring regional peace and security. The other way, which is also a tried way, is to overawe small neighbours with one's military prowess and to use it when small neighbours get out of line with the policies of the big boy. That is how the Soviets and the Americans have maintained stability in their backyards, but at increasing economic and ideological costs.

The Soviets admirably succeeded in militarily overpowering the Dubcek regime in 1968, only to find that the regime they have installed since is unable to solve the country's basic social and economic problems. Today Moscow is paying a stiff economic price for keeping its empire that is rife with all sorts of human rights movements. Again, the CIA-multinational collusion to topple the Allende regime has not only made a great many third world countries wary of multinational investments, but greatly weakened America's influence in Latin America.

The kind of role the Soviets and the Americans have played in their security spheres can only be emulated by us at disastrous cost. The former Prime Minister, elated by her victories over Pakistan and over the 'Indira Hatao' coalition in 1971, perhaps thought of such a role, but never really practised it with any sustained effort. The economic and political cost of an imperial role are something this fragile democracy just cannot afford. The Janata Government understands what Montesquieu understood five hundred years ago that a republic cannot undertake conquests without corrupting itself. But Delhi's desire for a reconciled sub-continent can in part be frustrated or fulfilled by the policies of the United States, the Soviet Union, China and, now, the oil rich Iran.

Some students of American foreign policy loosely believe that benign neglect, to use Patrick Moynihan's phrase, has been the

American attitude towards India. Many influential Indians firmly think that 'malign involvement' has been the American stance. For the better part of the thirty years since these two democracies have had relations with each other, the United States has aided us with food and money, though never generously. But in moments of our crises, the United States has always been malignly involved in the sub-continent. Thus, in the fifties America militarily aided Pakistan and thereby contributed to the Indo-Pak armed contest in 1965. Agam Washington while still containing the Sino-Soviet 'monolith' in 1962 did woefully little when we and the Chinese clashed in the Himalayas. And at the time of the 1971 Indo-Pak war, Washington expressed its tilt towards Pakistan and China by sending the Enterprise.

But that is all history as President Carter would like us to believe. Will or won't history be repeated? The answer to this question depends on what is the place of India in the post-Vietnam and post-Watergate America. India by itself is not that important, nor for that matter is the sub-continent. The area has little strategic significance and has no raw materials the west vitally needs. The sub-continent was low in American priorities and perhaps would have remained so, but for the energy crisis of 1973.

The Arab oil embargo and the sudden 400 per cent increase in the price of oil shocked the west into realization of another dimension of security. Resource depletion, the rich-poor gap, food, population, pollution, environment, are the problems that weigh as much in Washington's security considerations as nuclear weapons and European security.

In other words, India's importance in America's global scheme has increased with the growing importance of the third world. So long as global politics largely revolved around the east-west axis, Washington could afford to ignore or, if need be, hurt Delhi. Indeed, we were ignored by the United States after the 1965 Indo-Pak war because it thought that this area mattered

little and besides it was too messy. Let the Soviets step (witness the willingness with which the U.S. permitted the Soviets to play the mediatory role at Tashkent) into 'this murky' corner of the earth was the American attitude. Or hurt India if the dictates of the east-west competition demanded it. Dr. Kissinger did so in 1971. But today it is India or Brazil that has some power to hurt the United States. As President Carter's National Security Advisor, Dr. Brzezinski said 'the ghettos of Calcutta or Rio do ultimately threaten the prosperity of San Francisco or Boston.'

Anation of 600 million people that straddles both the industrial and the developing worlds greatly weighs in the north-south negotiations. It also happens to be a democracy, but that does not matter so much for the United States as some Janata Party members believe. What matters to Washington is that India is one of the most important countries in the developing south and that Washington wants her to espouse the cause of reform of the present international economic order and not its overthrow, as some radicals of the south want.

Why then disturb the stability of a region in which India is not only preponderant but which also weighs considerably in the north-south relationship? One thing one ought to be clear about is that India enjoys an outright superiority over Pakistan, no matter what our generals say. The military balance between us and Pakistan has been grossly imbalanced in our favour and against Pakistan since the 1965 war. Nothing sort of a massive inflow of sophisticated weapons from outside can reverse this imbalance, and that eventuality is remote.

It is all these considerations which probably made President Carter turn down the Pakistani request for A-7 aircrafts. In fact, a more dispassionate look at the US arms supply policy to Pakistan¹ shows

¹ See Stephen P. Cohen, 'A South Asia and U.S. Military Policy,' Appendixes, Commission on the Organisation of the Government for the conduct of Foreign Policy, June, 1975, pp. IL19-158.

that with the exception of Nixon's 'one-time exception' Washington abstained from arming Pakistan since 1965.

The US Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, was merely recognizing the importance of India when he said here last August that she should take the leadership of South Asia. It is helpful to have an outsider accept our preponderance because that somewhat furthers our design for a stable sub-continent. But in very large part its realization rests on how we translate our preponderance into a constructive foreign policy.

The other great power and our treaty partner, the Soviet Union, too accepts our special responsibility in this region. But here I must enter a caveat.

It is the restoration of democracy here under the leadership of the Janata Party that could disquiet Moscow a little. For one thing, there is not a person in the ranks of the Janata who is even remotely sympathetic to Soviet ideology. But ideology apart, it is the direction our policy of 'genuine non-alignment', as it is today described in contrast with non-alignment with a 'Soviet tilt' of the previous regime, might take that probably worries Moscow. True, the Janata leaders have not greatly departed from our past policy towards Moscow. To Gromyko, disturbed by various statements of the new government that it would scrap or revise the Indo-Soviet treaty, did Vajpayee say in last May that 'the bonds of friendship between the two countries are strong enough to survive the demands of divergent systems, the fate of an individual or the fortunes of a political party'.² Of course, it was the Soviet leadership that had described, in as late as the March election, the Janata leaders as the hirelings of the CIA and the Congress Party led by Mrs Gandhi as progressive. Even this is the past now, as Desai assured Brezhnev last October in Moscow.

But, what remains of this relationship today is profitable trade, not so profitable military aid and not much politics. As the Prime Minister said on his return from Moscow, we have no special relationship with any one. The central question is, can the Indo-Soviet relationship withstand the shock of a significant improvement in Sino-Indian relations? Surely not. In that event the possible policy choice for Moscow is to hurt Delhi by resuming arms assistance to Pakistan. In other words, Moscow well might tell the US that if it insists on having its own policy towards Peking, regardless of their interests, then they would have their own policy towards Islamabad, regardless of US interests.

In 1968 Moscow militarily aided Pakistan. That option is always there in the event of India deciding to considerably upgrade its relations with China. But this possibility is rather remote for two reasons. One, any Soviet involvement in Pakistan is risky in view of its domestic instability. But the other more compelling factor that would go against the Soviet attempt to aid Pakistan is the present policy stance of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both are conservative, largely pro-American and resolutely anti-Soviet, and would attempt to prevent Soviet entry into Pakistan at all cost. After all, if Teheran and Riyadh are out to fight the Soviets in the Horn of Africa, they would certainly fight them in Pakistan.

Apart from the great powers, there is the other and increasingly influential outsider to the region, Iran. Her friendship for us has grown since she became convinced sometime after the 1971 war that our treaty with the Soviets was not directed against Iran and her dismembered ally, Pakistan. Above all, the Shah needed assurance that Pakistan as it is constituted today serves our interests admirably. This he got by the visits to Iran by our past and present Prime Ministers.

So, Iran too does not wish to disturb the sub-continental stability —

a stability based on India wielding its preponderant power peacefully. But there is something disquieting in the Iranian ruler's aspirations for his country. No doubt the despot aspires to an imperial role in the oil-rich Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. And in his design, India fits in as a partner of the imperial Iran. For instance, take his statement at a recent press conference in Delhi that 'our policy that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace corresponds to that of India. If littoral States have to play a role, the role of your navy and our navy has to increase.'³

Our generals and admirals would welcome the Shah's call, but it would arouse deep suspicions of our small neighbours, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. And if these countries come to suspect — some already do — that India and Iran are colluding to dominate them, then their natural response would be to invite other big powers to balance the India-Iran domination. What is needed is the Shah's friendship, and not his imperial design, to construct a stable and co-operative sub-continent.

Perhaps, at no time in the last thirty years has our external environment looked more promising than today. All the three great powers, the US, the USSR and China, for different reasons, are inclined to accept the power configuration as it has been coming about since 1971. No more does the US-USSR-China triangular power constellation look so menacing as it did in 1971. At that time we thought that Kissinger's dramatic opening towards China was aimed at us and therefore we concluded the treaty with the Soviet Union. But today Carter's America accords us a weighty role in the sub-continent and the north-south dialogue. The Soviet Union has little choice but to maintain the present level of relationship and hope that we would not substantially repair our relations with China.

Our professions of 'genuine non-alignment,' probably are taken more seriously in Peking today than at

2. See 'Hindustan Times,' 27 May, 1977.

3. Times of India, 5 February, 1978

any time in the past. The virulence with which the Chinese attacked the 'collusion' between the Soviet 'revisionists' and the Indian 'reactionaries' in the past has now given way to a near absence of comments on Indo-Soviet relations. In fact, Teng's recent statement in Kathmandu is a cautious call for friendship

If our external environment is largely conducive to efforts to strike a new posture towards our neighbours, our internal environment is less so. There is the bureaucracy for whom any innovation is unsettling and there is the military for whom, if there is anything dearer to it than the weapons they have, it is the weapons they want next. Thus, the air force wants the DPSAs, the navy an all ocean going fleet⁴ and the army, god knows what — presumably some very expensive toys. Only politics can rescue us from the Indo-Pak arms race that will undoubtedly result⁵ from our decision to acquire these weapons. When will politicians have the courage to tell military men that enough is enough and no more?

Since our birth as a nation, we have looked upon the sub-continent as a region of sovereign States, each competing with the other to get the best at the diplomatic table or in the battle field. Perhaps, that was only to understand our neighbours. But, today, the world over there is a concern for the kind of development which protects and promotes human values. Even as hard headed a realist as Dr Brzezinski, the American Presidential Advisor on National Security Affairs, admits that there are the dim flickerings of 'universal consciousness'. No more is the globe just characterised by the competition for power between the nation-States, but also by the struggle of the people for development and individual freedom in the third world and the socialist world and by the growing revulsion of the people of the democratic west against senseless materialism.

Co-operation between the countries of the sub-continent will only come when its largest unit, India, begins to comprehend the dynamics of change. The 800 or so million peoples of this area make up an entity that is linguistically and culturally the most homogenous in the third world. Its people display political consciousness that is unsurpassed anywhere in the developing world. It is time that policy-makers, particularly the bureaucracy, understood the dynamics of sub-continental politics and devised a policy which corresponds to the reality. The old military-diplomatic chessboard on which we have played for thirty years with mediocre skill just cannot answer the needs of the present. Playing this chessboard is necessary to ensure one's physical security, but that is only one dimension of security. More lasting security lies in weaving between us and our neighbours sets of ties that one can snap only at tremendous cost to itself — interdependence, to use the current idiom of international politics. For instance why spend so much diplomatic effort in resisting Nepal's demand for a 'zone of peace'. Why not cajole Nepal and Bangladesh into making a beginning for the harnessing of the eastern rivers? Secure supply of water will become, in the coming decade, as important as the supply of oil and minerals.

There is another dimension to security that should concern a democracy like our's which has just been eclipsed. Ultimately, our security lies in our neighbours sharing our values. Each time someone asks a South Block bureaucrat whether we should support, for instance, B P Koirala, his answer is choose between Koirala and the King. He believes that Delhi cannot have workable relations with the Nepali monarch by espousing the cause of Koirala. At best the argument is facile, at worst specious. Of course, one can deal with a dictator by reminding him that the way he threatens his dissenters is not exclusively his own business. Would the Shah have called off his aid for the bauxite or paper pulp plant if we had freely permitted the Iranian students here to demonstrate against him? No.

4 The demand for an all ocean going navy is made by Admiral Nanda *Ibid*, note 4

5. For a well argued case against acquiring DPSAs see P R. Chari, 'Times of India,' 17 February, 1978

Appearance and reality

P. N. HAKSAR

I DO not recall a single occasion during the last thirty-one years when problems of our country's security were discussed seriously and in depth. Even the current debate centres around the question of acquiring so-called Deep Penetration Strike Aircraft (D.P.S.A.). Our air force, naturally, argues that without such an aircraft our security *vis-a-vis* Pakistan would be put into jeopardy. Our army, out of a sheer sense of comradeship, lends support to such a contention by silence rather than any deep convictions. Only retired generals show some signs of articulation. But then they are faced by the inevitable retort of being no longer responsible for our defence and security. The navy takes up a non-aligned position befitting the silent service until the questions of dressing up the old crock — the Vikrant, with new aircraft and developing a naval air command come up.

Inter-service rivalries and demands are not peculiar to India. But the relative cost of such rivalries is much higher for our country. In matters relating to defence, we lack strong political leadership which would take upon itself the risks of a decision. And the weakness of this leadership is further compounded by lack of understanding on the part of our populace that war does mean discomfort and even death in which the civilians and the armed forces must be co-sharers. The second world war taught Londoners, Moscovites and Leningraders to 'take it' and, of course, the residents of Hanoi and Haiphong took it

even more impressively. But one wonders how the citizens of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi would respond.

Our approach to the problems of defence and security is somewhat romantic and akin to that prevailing in the west on the eve of the first world war, with this difference that we maintain a million strong standing army and are still struggling to generate wealth. This, in turn, generates the comfortable feeling that war is the exclusive concern of the armed forces and that civilians, except perhaps in Punjab, can carry on as usual. The cost-effectiveness of such a psychology induced by our political culture is expectedly very low, consequently, the financial burden is very high indeed. It is no use blaming the armed forces and lecturing to them about doing some educational work without involving themselves in 'local politics'.

The problems of security and defence are extremely complex. These involve unravelling the inter-relationship between factors which make for a country's political, economic and social integration and cohesion as well as its international relations and foreign policy. Hence, the old adage that war is a continuation of politics by other means, or that war is too serious a business to be left to the generals. There is no such mature understanding in our country. Witness the perfunctory manner in which our Parliament debates defence matters. The annual exercise of voting on Defence Esti-

mates has been reduced to a mere ritual Parliamentary excursions into the realm of defence sometimes generate heat but never light. And when it does generate heat, it ends up in adopting seemingly heroic postures as is evidenced by the resolution adopted in 1962 that we are not to surrender an inch of territory. The political directive to our armed forces which results from such attitudinising naturally puts them psychologically on the defensive.

Modern war is a war of movement. The clear cut distinction between the front and the rear is obliterated. The aim of war is not conquest of territory but the destruction of the fighting capabilities and potential of the enemy and to shatter its morale. Consequently, tactical retreats and withdrawals, feints and surprises are inevitable. To saddle our armed forces with the strategic doctrine of not surrendering an inch of our territory is to cramp their initiative.

The situation is further aggravated by the knowledge derived from past experience, that our wars cannot last longer than what the Security Council would dictate to us. In such circumstances, the intrinsic advantages we enjoy in terms of the skilled manpower we possess, the space over which we can manoeuvre in depth, the strength of our industrial complex never come into play. We therefore fight with borrowed plumes. Inevitably, therefore, the purchase of DPSA becomes of such high importance and almost inevitable unless, as I argued, the alleged or real risk of not having it is clearly borne by the civil side of the government.

Within the framework of the existing political directive, threat perception and its assessment together with the assumption that any possible war in which we are likely to be engaged must of necessity be of short duration, there is no escape from DPSA as an important psychological prop for our air force. To say that this would upset the so-called 'recent mini-detente' is, to say the least, somewhat curious. It reflects the

anxiety of those who are preparing the new thesis about India's role as a regional power on whom now rests the responsibility of leading Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal — possibly Sri Lanka, into a system of regional security.

There are many in our country who feel flattered by this which emboldens the writer of the poser to pontificate when he says: 'To a very great extent regional peace rests upon the security — and perception of that security — of other States in the region, and the management of Indian military policy must necessarily accommodate enemies as well as friends. Our main concern, however, is the possibility that weaponry has taken command, plumage has overwhelmed the peacock'. Fine rhetoric! But it should be noted that while Henry Kissinger always flattered our ego that India was of global significance and Pakistan only of regional, we have now been promoted to the level of Pakistan! This must be the result of some 'realistic' thinking in which academics, both indigenous and foreign, specialise.

One might ask who are our friends and who are our enemies whom we must 'accommodate'? And what is the nature of this 'accommodation'? We have always accommodated our friends despite serious misgivings. Thus, when in 1954, the Eisenhower Doctrine was propounded and in response to which Pakistan was enlisted as a crusader against communism and armed for 12 long years, we said at the very beginning, as Krishna Menon put it picturesquely, that he knew of no guns which fired only one way. And Nehru expressed our national anguish in his own way when he spoke in Parliament on February 22, 1954 and again on March 13, 1959.

I should like to refer to the proposed US aid to Pakistan. Recently the House has seen that there has been a pact between Turkey and Pakistan and it is said that this is likely to be followed by some kind of arrangement between the United States and Pakistan for military aid. Our concern is not so much

due to any ill feeling against Pakistan, and certainly to any ill feeling against India. But I have felt strongly that the first step is a wrong step which adds to the fears of the world and the feeling of insecurity. It is, therefore, from the point of view of security and removal of fear (Feb. 22, 1954)

'Spokesmen of the government have on various occasions stated that in entering into an agreement with India in joining military alliances is to strengthen against India. We have pointed this out and sized that the United States defence aid to Pakistan gives the Pakistanis their aggressiveness, tension and conflict with India and Pakistan known for some cases of attempted Jammu and Kashmir have used some name of United States. It is not possible to have this equipment is United States defence aid to Pakistan has been purchased on normal commercial wider interpretation Pakistan authorities Agreement is, there of grave concern to India in the context experience of repudiating aggressive the part of Pakistan sure that the Government of the United States nothing but goodwill that they will not any agreements, formal, open or may threaten the India'. (March 13, 1959)

Let us recall the folly of the Eisenhower Doctrine. The rulers of Pakistan themselves and having seduced themselves by pro hypnotic of their military launched a trial attack in January 1965. And the

well. The Kutch episode was studied in depth with the aid of computers. And it all confirmed Indian decadence under Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistan martial virtues. And so everything was favourable for seizing Kashmir. The usual infiltration tactics began in August 1965 followed by the launching of an armed attack. The story is well known. Only two episodes need to be noted.

The then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, thought that it might be a good idea for the political education of our people to display in Delhi one of the captured US tanks. This brought forward a spirited protest from the US Ambassador. And so we accommodated our friends. The second episode was the famous statement made by Prime Minister Harold Wilson about India being an aggressor. His subsequent retraction in his autobiography did not add to his stature. However, we have never held Wilsonian trespass as an impediment to an improvement of Indo-British friendship. I am not raking all this up to create bad blood, but I think past history must be quietly remembered in order to safeguard oneself against future follies.

What has been the effect on Pakistan of its military involvement under the cover of Cento? The all too palpable effect has been to divert the attention of Pakistani leaders, both military and civil, from problems of internal, social, political, economic and constitutional restructuring. The result has been too painful for everyone to see. Bangladesh was a dramatic illustration of the total failure of national integration. The current situation in Pakistan is a further elaboration of the broad theme. If war is too serious a business to be left to generals, politics and economics are even more serious.

Thus the chances of General Zia-ul-Haq succeeding where Iskandar Mirza, Ayub and Yahya failed are none too bright. And the same sort of prognosis would be valid for the other General Zia despite the fact that Bangladesh is far more cohesive — culturally, linguistically and ethni-

cally, than Pakistan. Even if one were to contemplate the vision of a regional security system, it must rest on a more stable socio-economic and political foundation than what obtains at present in the countries concerned. I am also assuming that the proposed regional security system would not be an extension of Cento or a sub-system of Nato by another name.

No sane minded Indian can have any interest in Pakistan falling apart. On the contrary, when we signed the Simla Agreement in 1972, we made a big investment in securing for Pakistan conditions for its internal evolution in tranquility and even experimenting with a democratic system. That investment was further strengthened by subsequent agreements which liquidated all the problems arising out of the 1971 war. The so-called mini-detente is therefore, neither recent nor new, nor is it proceeding at glacial pace as the author of 'the Problem' in this issue of *Seminar* would have us believe. Therefore, to build a whole structure of an argument on a mythical 'new phenomenon' is either to beguile oneself or others.

Let us have a quick look at Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, General Zia wishes to acquire credible legitimacy by getting himself elected as President. But what would happen after that. Another night of the long knife? And whither will he be driven by the Islamic confederates and the Chinese — an altogether bizarre combination. And how are such external affiliations consistent with a regional security system. Doesn't it warrant the suspicion that the fingers which will pull the strings are located outside the sub-continent? Finally, what role do the Japanese wish to play? Is it not a fact that the more distracted the internal politics of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the more each is torn from its sub-continental context and sought to be becalmed by a seemingly new haven of tranquility. For Pakistan, the haven is West Asia and Cento. And for Bangladesh? Is it going to be South-East Asia, Asean and Seato?

We cannot derive much comfort from the regional security system

which is pulled by undisclosed or partially disclosed principals whose pre-occupation is not with our security but with the precariousness of balance of power equations in the world in which an India enclosed in a container called 'Regional Security' would become a ZERO Power System

The world is moving into a period of great turmoil, instability and tensions. In such a situation, India cannot purchase its security by gimmickry. We must address ourselves to some basic questions. All these years we have shirked facing uncomfortable questions. The most fundamental one is, can a country of the size and resources such as India, wishing to zealously safeguard its independence and sovereignty and pursuing a policy of non-alignment in defence of that independence, afford to ignore the logical inter-connection between assertion of such independence and its political, economic and security imperatives?

Can India wishing to pursue the line of detente with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, which we must, do so without great sacrifices in defence of the democratic and secular character of its polity and self reliant economy based on a modern industry resting on the foundations of a broadbased modernised agriculture with both industry and agriculture, fertilized by the latest in science and technology? The defence and security of India are functionally related to the viability of our economic, political and cultural system. For, security is not a simple arithmetical question of counting the number of men under arms, of the number of guns and tanks and aeroplanes. Security is as much a product of arms, armour and armed men, tactical skills of the leaders of the armed forces as of the entire socio-political and economic structure. Without such a clear understanding a country can be defeated in an armed conflict if it merely counts the number of guns and other gadgets. I hope I have succeeded in putting into proper perspective the real problems we face if we are to discuss meaningfully our defence and security.

Communications

I WRITE this to present my views on the *Our Intellectuals (Seminar — 222)*. I may briefly comment on the writeups of your contributors to begin with. The poser of the problem by Beteille is rather disappointing. He largely devotes himself to historical facts and perspectives. I wish he had not bypassed conceptual and theoretical aspects of this unique socio-cultural phenomenon. Kurien's views on self-centered and self-perpetuating intellectuals unable to relate themselves to life's common tasks are well taken. He deserves praise for plam speaking on a shaky contemporary Indian scene. Romila Thapar presents a systematic analysis and perspective of the construction of intellectual traditions in India. However, she lays emphases mainly on what is happening in Indian universities and deplores the lack of communication between the intellectuals and the rest of the people, and their failure to meet social responsibility.

Nandi discusses the burning problem of safeguards vis-a-vis the monopolistic trends within the academic intellectuals. He not only deplores that the government at one time functioned as an instrument for settling personal scores by politicians on some intellectuals, but blames the latter for exploiting government patronage. He crosses psychological probability while suggesting that 'a multi-cultural, multi-ideological open community of those leading a life of the mind' shall make creative and moral accountability possible. There is little doubt that at this point he forces his point to a scale of value-loaded absurdity. Jha, in his characteristic way, gives a fairly detailed analyses of influences of top politicians on the academicians in Delhi University. This happened in the times of the Emergency and continues to happen even now. He supports Nandi's view that the intellectuals have an inherent tendency to exploit political patronage for partisan ends.

You have earlier devoted four issues also (Vols 7, 92, 112 & 184) to this vital subject covering its academic and political aspects. But have you assessed the impact of these on whatever the target group you may have in mind? I strongly feel that the desired direct impact of it on any social group in the country is nil. That is of course none of your fault. The indirect impact, possibly, is like a T V programme relayed through a satellite from outer space. So far so good, but that is not an unadulterated prototype of what appears in *Seminar*.

Foreign intellectuals firstly analyse your author's views in the way they like and then dress up the

stuff and present it to us in various forms such as news items, commentaries, articles and even books. When our hungry intellectuals get this reflected stuff, they grab, chew and remunerate upon it like unmindful cows. Then they attempt to convert the same into 'nourishing' milk for the 'natives' to enjoy. Don't you think that indiscriminate intellectual activity like this is contaminable, abominable and dangerous? Too much of it is bound to lead us to parasitic existence and even condemnation. Who is to decide how much of it is happening today? Particularly when we examine some futuristic studies with written advice to us, it is clear that they do nothing but poison our present and future perspective of life with one stroke.

Caught up with the situation noted above, what we intellectuals probably need to do is to start a secular mass movement named *Mirror Sect* advocated by a poet of Gujarat in the mediaeval period of our history. The devotees of this Sect (called *darpan sampraday* in Gujarati) were expected to carry a mirror with them and were asked to see their faces in it before commencing any major daily activity. For instance, the mirror sect devotee was asked to see the face in the mirror in the morning after getting up from bed etc., etc., and to do the same before going to bed. The intent was to prompt a devotee to practice self-examination and introspection to enable him to correct the course of his actions to a desirable goal of community good. It was expected that the act of looking into the mirror to see his face at the turn of each new event would prevent a person from doing anything that may otherwise endanger the safety, happiness and wellbeing of his fellowmen.

Believe me, I am not an advocate of this exotic sect for our intellectuals. They need not indulge in gimmicks of this kind of mirror-looking for self-cure and introspection. But they should, as early as possible, shun the gimmicks and imitation of the reflected brand of knowledge discussed earlier. If they choose to do so, I am sure, they will do a lot of good to themselves and to the masses of the people who look upon them with respect and admiration. Moreover, it is also desirable that a high-powered intellectual would do well to restrain himself from looking down upon a smaller guy of his breed as junk or useless stuff.

In terms of Sorokin's socio-cultural framework, we are in the grip of sensate (and shameless)

intellectual traditions as against the ideational and idealistic. May god help us, the intellectuals.
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AS I am just finishing my reading of *Seminar-220* on Bengal, I cannot help contrasting the pre-election reports from Karnataka. Urs' roots of power lie deep in the hearts of the under-privileged and the poor, they remain unshaken by the corruption charges and even by his association with the 'Emergency Congress'.

In the axiomatics of Marxism, fundamental changes towards the goal of socio-economic justice are impossible without coercion (which may involve physical violence), without total control of State power (our State governments lack such power) and without a dedicated cadre who works shoulder to shoulder with the oppressed to build a counter-power of the exploited class. Land-reform, though legislated, is defeated in practice, due to the black-mail by the organised power of the privileged land-lord class, backed by the police. Whatever investments are made in rural development projects, the funds are siphoned off by the rich and the powerful groups in the villages for their own interest, leaving the destitute in continued agony and despondency.

The chief minister of Karnataka has broken the 'chains'. Land-reform has made significant gains in effectively distributing land to the tiller, significant advances are made with regard to rural (and urban) housing and water supply; loan-sharks are humbled and the rural-poor-indebtedness is eradicated, even on such a touchy issue as that of family planning, targets are not only reached but even exceeded, only through voluntary measures. Most of all, the hegemony of the till yesteryear dominant castes and groups, and of the rich educated elite is broken.

Few States with similar advantages and limitations can claim as much. May be the achievements (or my perception of them) are exaggerated, but even what is admitted as having been achieved can hardly be dismissed as propaganda, few reporters, if any, can be accused of 'pro-Urs' bias now-a-days.

Though the Janata defeat is assumed as explained on the basis of 'defection-tactics' resorted to and the rebel phenomenon, Urs' success can hardly be explained purely on the basis of 'populist demagoguery' and the 'backwardness' of the people.

Granting some at least of the achievements, lovers of democracy and socio-economic justice are faced with hard choices, the only state-minister who claims to have achieved a measure of socio-economic justice within the existing frame-work, peacefully in a large measure, is a supporter of the 'dynastic dictatorship' party!

Indian political scientists of the left, centre and the right have an important aspect to study
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U.S A

NOW that temporary closures of universities and other institutions of higher learning for various reasons (not all of them student unrest), have again become a campus commonplace, some basic questions — some of them new or imponderable — could be asked all over again.

When work stops at an institution of higher learning (let us call this IHL for convenience here) because some human agency has organised or otherwise initiated a course of events that results in the stoppage, this agency proceeds on the firm assumption that an IHL cannot stop work for ever. The protagonist (i.e., the stoppage causing agency) is able to pressurize the antagonist (i.e., those responsible for the establishment and maintenance of an IHL) because of this assumption, which is shared unquestioningly by both sides.

Would the pressure tactics that are employed in such a situation be the same if this assumption were no longer to be granted? That is, if an IHL could close or be closed down for ever like a mill or a business firm, would the forms of causing an IHL to stop work remain the same? An IHL stopping work causes most harm ultimately to the student — by delaying the completion of the process by which the main objective of entering the IHL is fulfilled — but he is so little aware of it that he is often the stoppage-causing agency. If he were more aware, collectively as well as individually, he would surely exert himself in the direction of ensuring that the problems blocking the normal functioning of an IHL should be sorted out without the IHL having to stop functioning, however temporarily.

Who is to do this 'sorting out'? If it is to be done from inside the IHL (any move to do so from outside would be condemned as violation of the so-called 'autonomy' of the institution), some organised sector of it will have to undertake this responsibility.

Generally, an IHL population can be divided into four bodies — the students, the teachers, the administrative staff, and the service personnel. Of these, the latter three have this in common that they are all wage-earners in a familiar employer-employee set-up, sharing the same employer and such concerns as pay scales, leave rules, housing facilities, retirement benefits, etc. What they do not have in common is that in everyday practice the administration is allowed to occupy a separate and superior status. The service staff's being subordinate and accountable to the administration may be a necessary working relationship, even the teaching staff is apt to find itself in the position of being, if not subordinate, at least accountable to the

administration As a result, these three bodies, that synchronize in normal circumstances, have no influence upon one another in abnormal circumstances — i.e., when any one of these bodies has brought about work-stoppage Hence no resolution can be essayed by the other two bodies.

Of these three organised sectors of an IHL population, the teachers stand apart by virtue of their unique work situation The administrative and the service staff could very easily work in any other kind of institution — say, the Rationing Office or the Life Insurance Corporation The teacher has place only in a teaching institution, an institution which has no parallel anywhere else in society For example, he is not a guru initiating and admitting a chela into the same vocation, nor is he a master-craftsman training an apprentice to follow the same craft. Neither the guru-chela relation nor the ustad-shagird relation approximates the teacher-student relation of modern education This very uniqueness prevents the teacher's body from acting as a resolving factor. The basic work he does (namely, teaching) is immeasurable, since there is no tangible product He is not accountable, since his routine teaching action cannot be related easily to any consequences Even his rights are not definable, since responsibilities are so abstract and illusory, and it is not clear with whom he is on any kind of social contract Whatever role he fulfils in an IHL, it is not amenable to measurement, accountability or definition.

Can the resolution then be effected by the fourth component of the IHL population, the student, body, which is wholly outside the give-service receive-payment syndrome that applies to the other three? Not being bound by the constraint of this syndrome, the student body seems far more free to act in a manner that will resolve the problem The student, after all, is the sole reason for the establishment and maintenance of an IHL and he is the most directly and adversely affected party when an IHL stops working

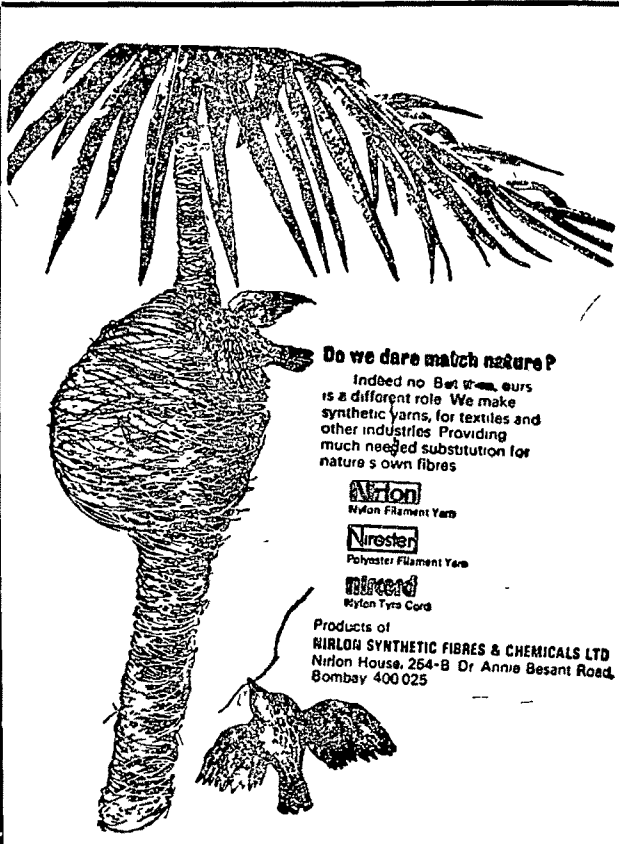
Yet, how 'free' is the student to act? While he is undergoing whatever education an IHL has to offer, his parents or guardians pay for his tuition and upkeep while government meets the remaining costs of his education. Either of these paymasters wants to constrain him in certain ways. Also, he is a highly temporary resident on the campus, ever on the way to leaving it within three to four years by a process not unlike the physiological process of peristalsis. Or, to change the simile, the student at an IHL is like the patient at a hospital. Just as patients cannot effectively gang up on those who fund, administer and staff a hospital, students are equally ineffective when they launch any joint action aimed at the betterment of their own situation. Their joint actions in support of or in opposition to any other cause seldom bring about any lasting change towards improvement in any other aspect of the campus situation. Their most constructive achievements have generally been away from the

campus — in rural uplift or flood relief or election campaigns. They could have achieved as much even without enrolling at an IHL.

To return to my original question — can an IHL close down for ever? — the obvious answer is, it cannot, because it is a kind of public utility. The next question would then be: who uses this utility? This is less easy to answer Theoretically, an IHL produces trained manpower for undertaking various kinds of work the country needs to be done In actual practice — since the country cannot produce jobs at the same rate at which it is turning out trained persons — the main function of an IHL is to keep our younger citizens off the streets as long as possible, and as many in number as possible. The reality is often overlooked at all levels of our educational planning. It is a harsh reality, because higher education for the few is possible only by denying lower education to the many. Our rulers and their planners may find it uncomfortable to acknowledge this inequity, but our students should never be allowed to forget it

If an IHL is a public utility, the least we (as older citizens, parents, taxpayers, etc.) may justifiably expect is that it should run smoothly and suffer as few breakdowns brought about by human agencies, as humanly possible.

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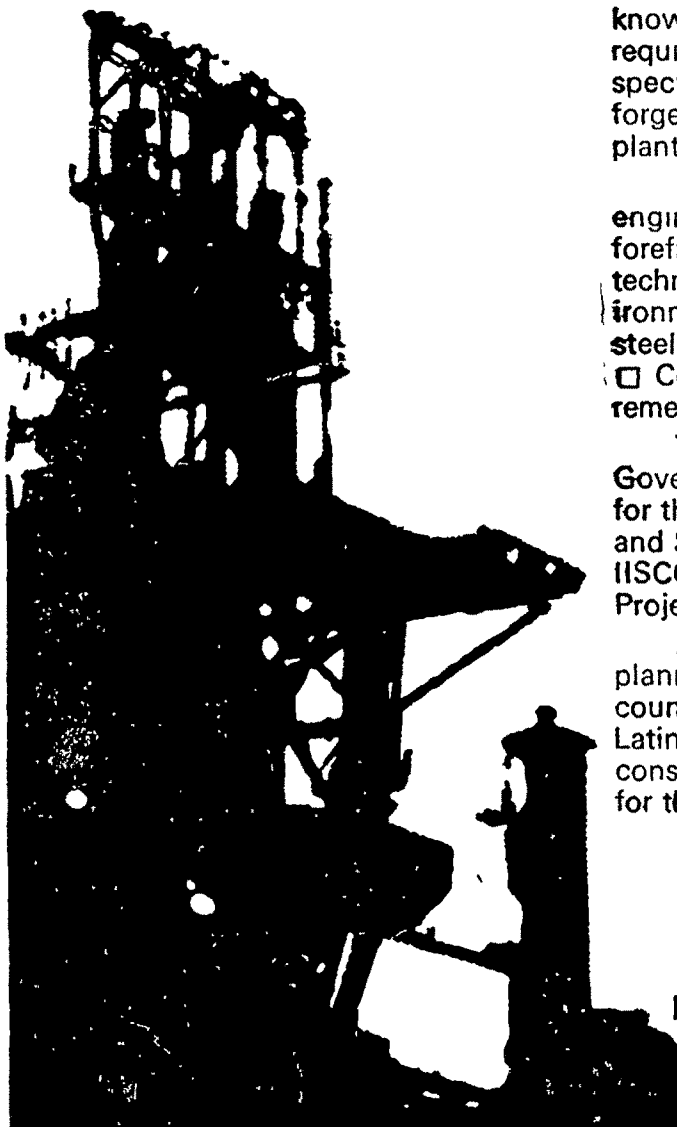
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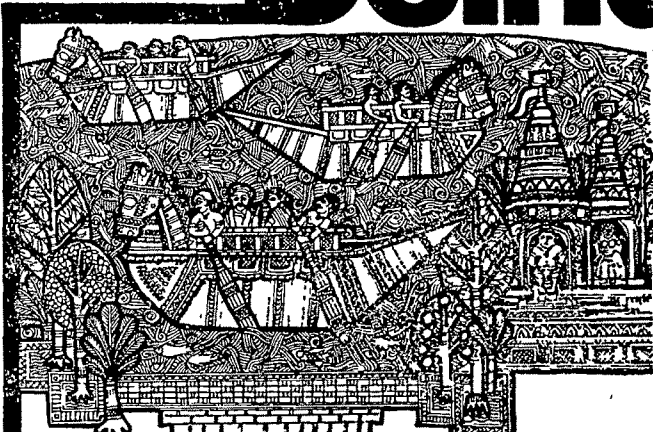
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BHUTAN: THE DRAGON KINGDOM IN CRISIS

Nari Rustomji

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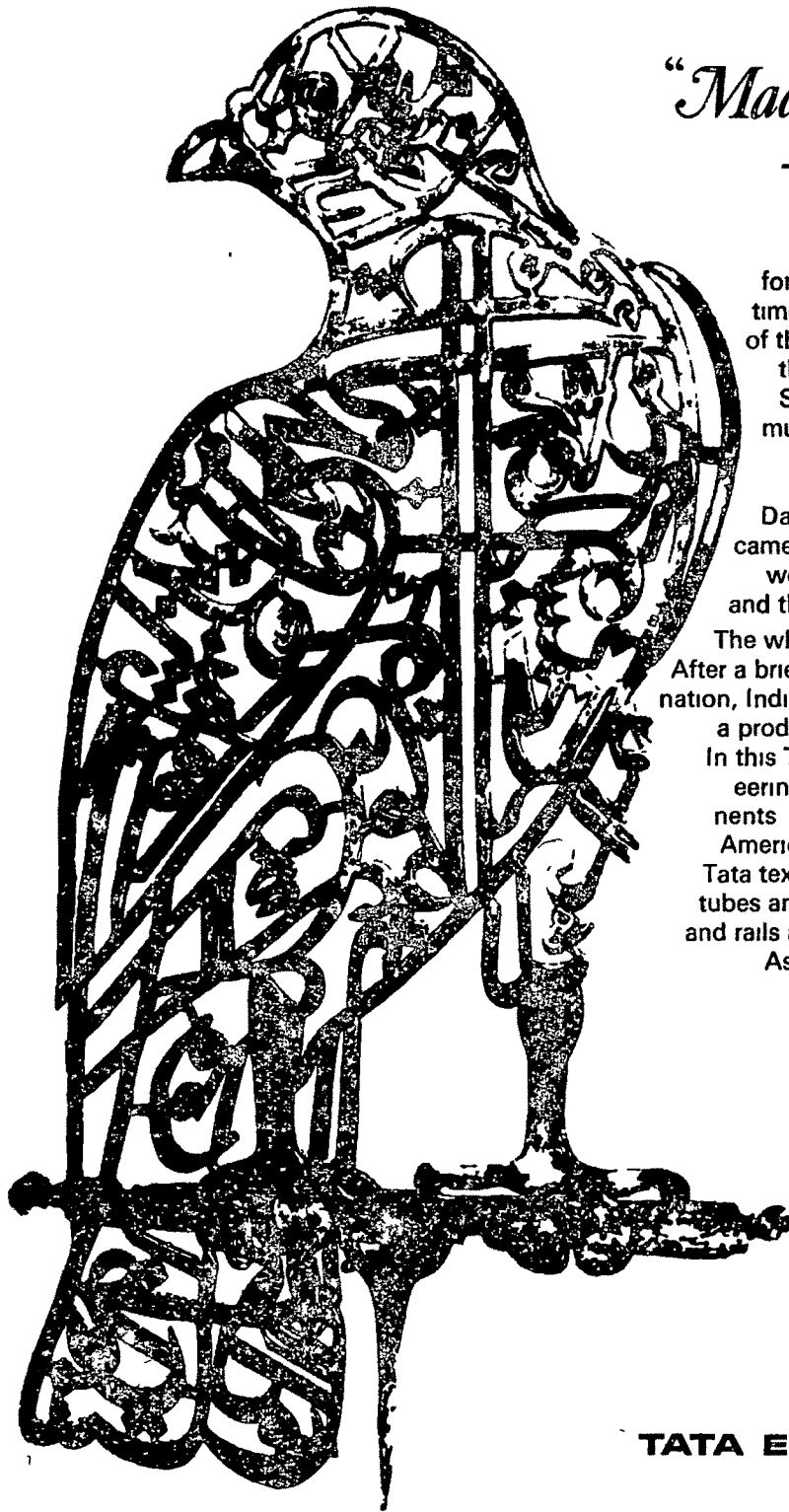
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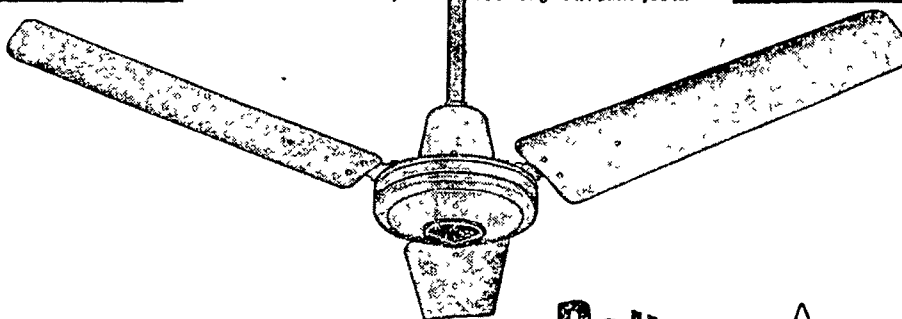
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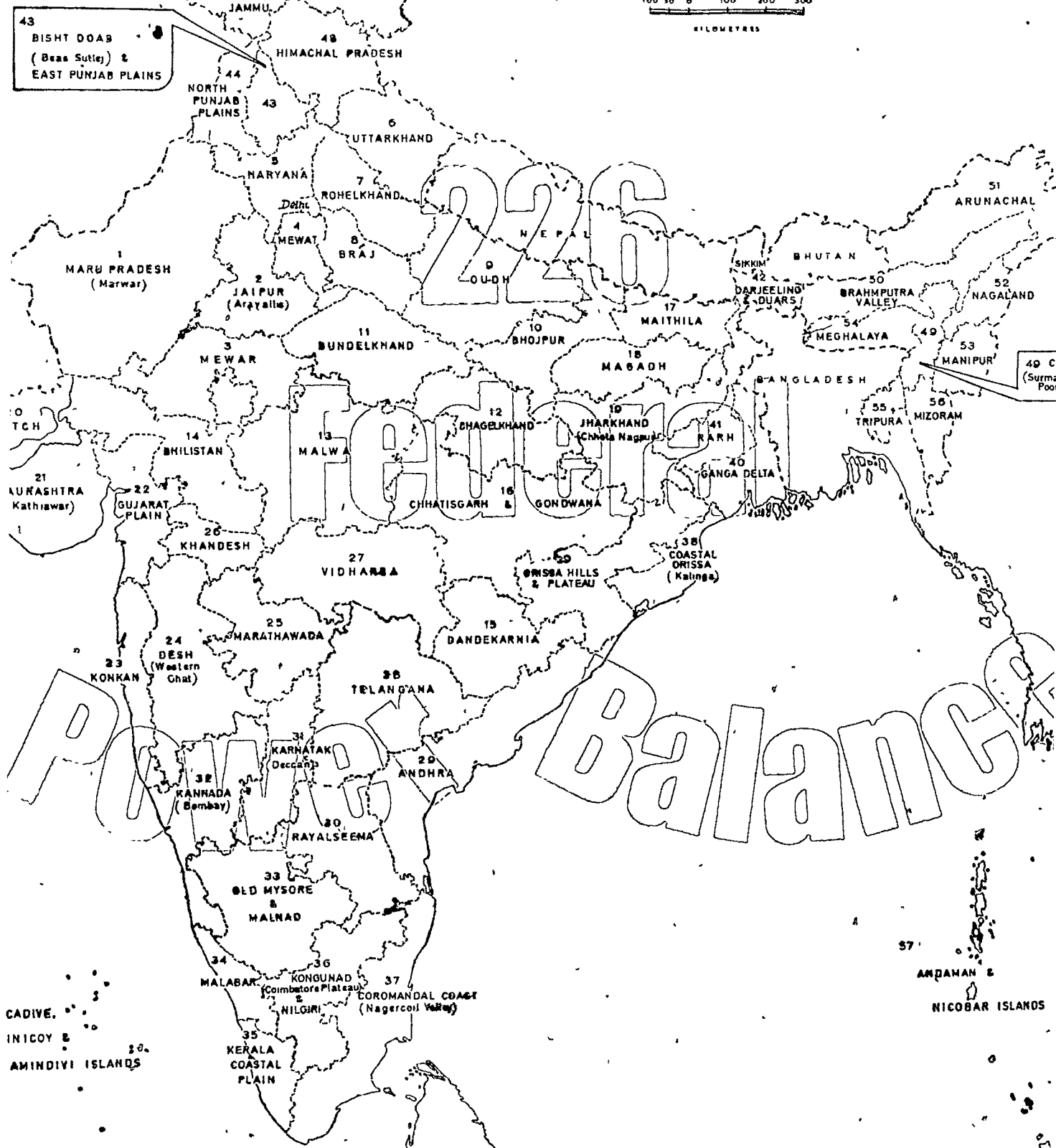
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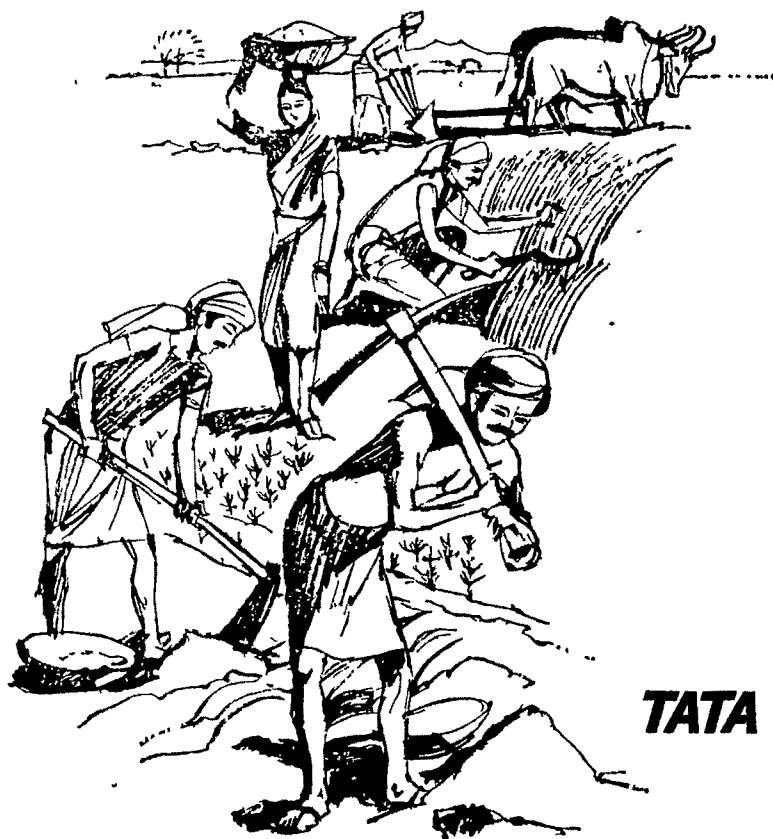
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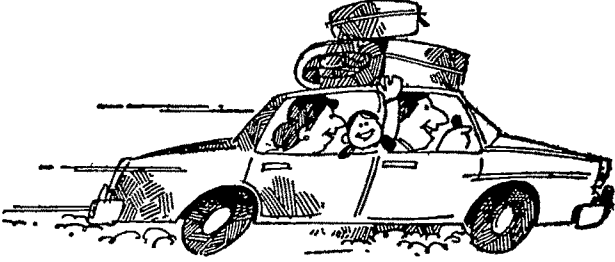

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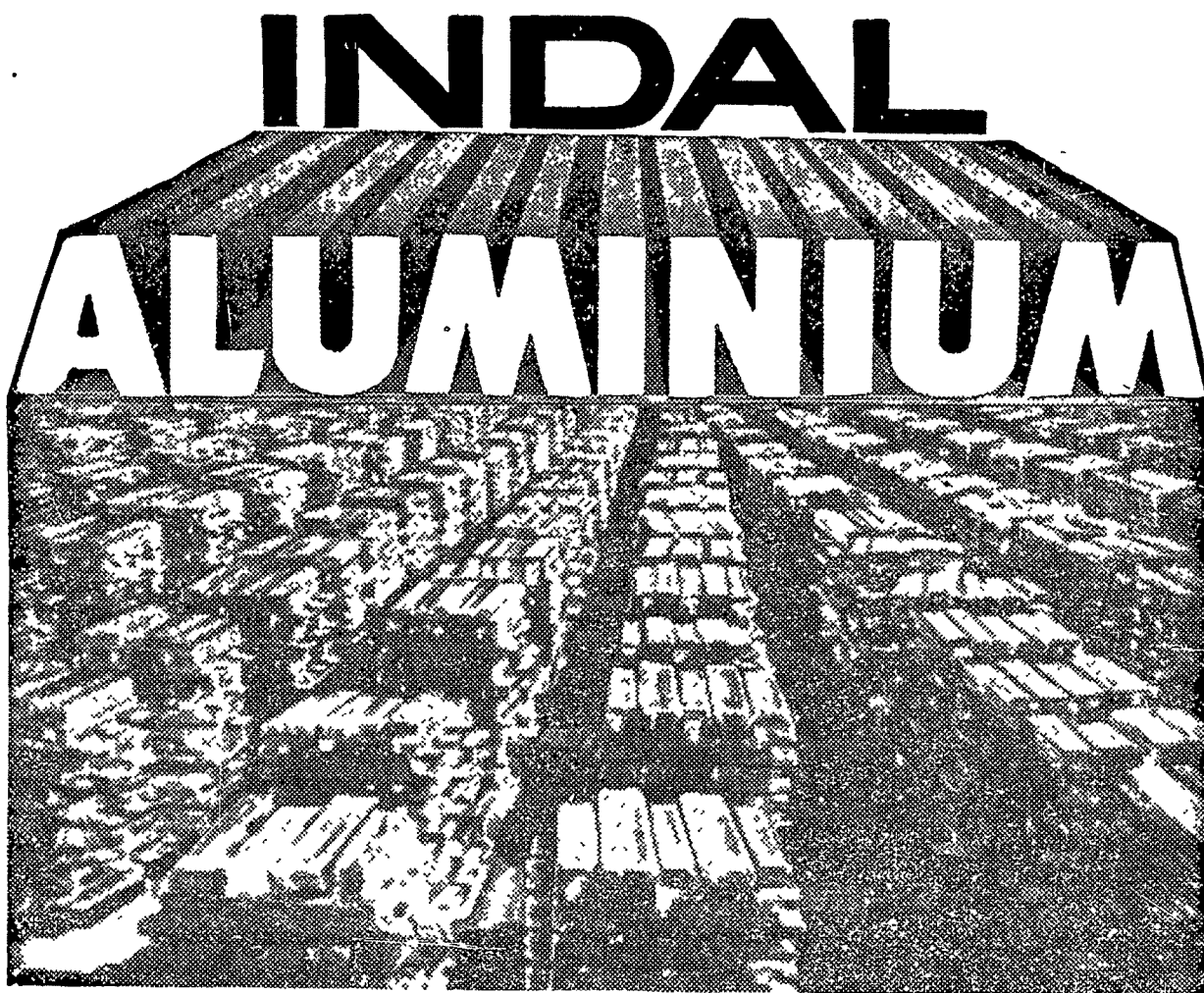
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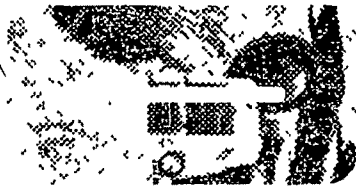
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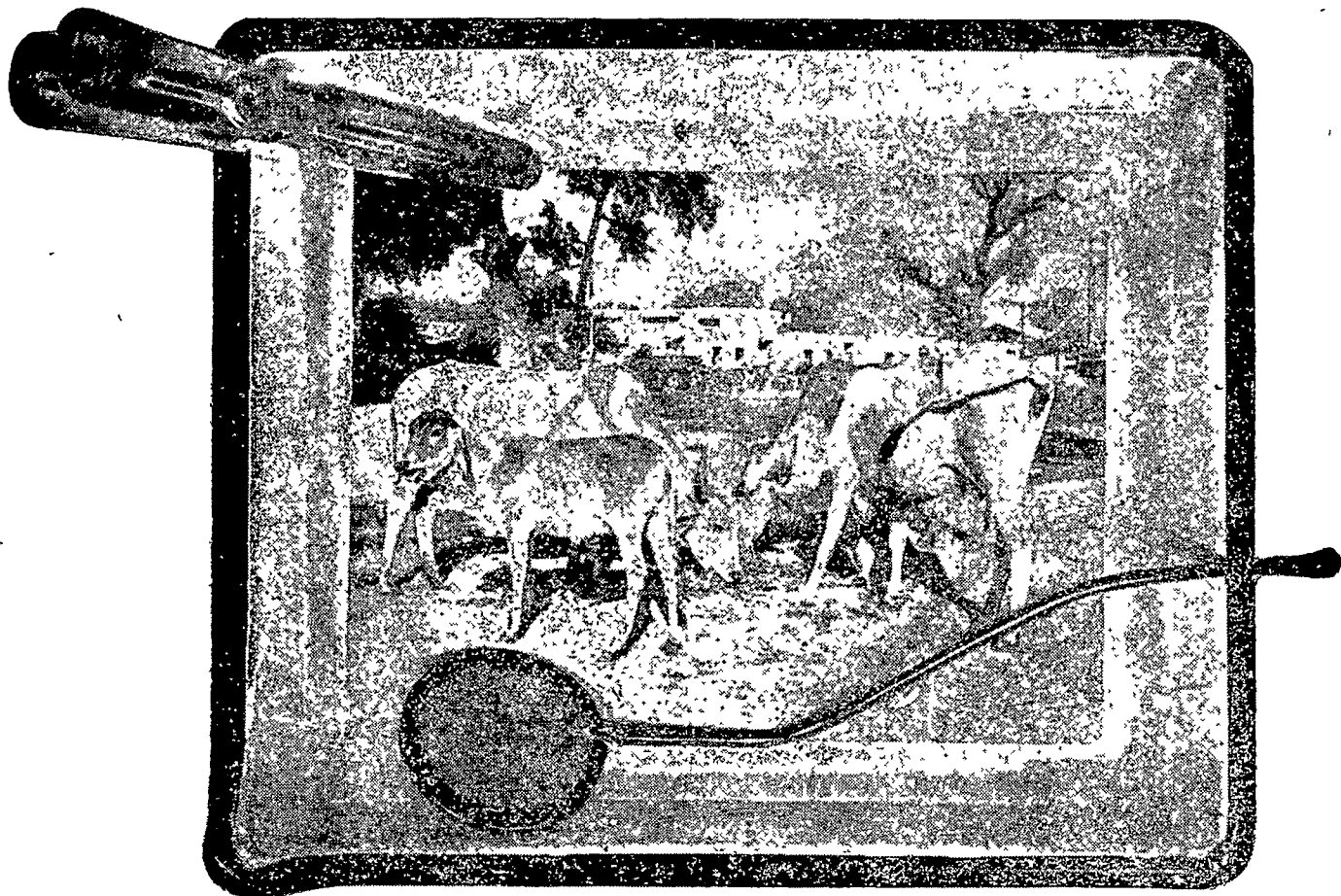
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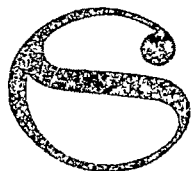
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NEXT MONTH : THE RURAL CHALLENGE

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FEDERAL POWER

a symposium on
the equations between
the centre and the states

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of
the issues involved

CHANGING GEOGRAPHY

S Manzoor Alam, Head, Department of
Geography, Osmania University,
Hyderabad

COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

Dharma Vira, veteran administrator
and former Governor

PRESERVING THE BALANCE

K C Pant, Congressman, has held several
ministerial appointments in the
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Ashok Mitra, Finance Minister in the
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COVER

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The problem

When the Constituent Assembly met to draft the constitution of a free India, it did a remarkable job of balancing the power embodied in such a document. To expect, as some appear to suggest, that the constitution-makers foresaw every possible challenge that would arise in the future, is to frame the exercise in upanishadic euphoria. India's population and problems have assumed dimensions which even the far-sighted perceived only dimly.

We have learnt over the years that centralised decision-making is inherent in the very nature of technological advance and this means that the gulf between the mass of the people and the elite decision-making apparatus is widening dangerously—and all over the world. A great collision is developing within the structures of an essentially old elitism and the many millions moving to demand equality. This is true of both the communist and non-communist systems, although the expressions are different. Unless the gulf is bridged, and the people participate in giving direction to their lives, there will be no way out of the stock-piling of anger, frustration and violence which now mar life everywhere.

In India, this problem is further accentuated by the variety of cultures, whether minor or major, and by the impoverishment of

the people at the base, and therefore their helplessness and resentment at being considered a statistic to be played around with by a super elite. This situation has to be looked at squarely. Solutions must enlarge the area of democracy by giving power to a larger and larger number of people without endangering the unity of the country.

In the early years, despite a crippling partition of the sub-continent, we worked out a more rational organisation of States. We spoke of a federal power balance, although we never really educated public opinion about its creative content. When the balance of power was rudely disturbed, no one really protested. Politics had already become a thing of manipulation and corruption, a whore of the market place. And, now, when India's population demands smaller and more cohesive States, the parallel cry rises for a proper decentralisation of federal power. Today, as a first step towards a more just, participative democracy, we have to discuss the exercise of power on our complex sub-continent and pick out the threads of decentralisation so essential to political health. This latest of our constitutional exercises will demand profound statesmanship from our politicians and opinion-makers

Changing geography

S. MANZOOR ALAM

THE responsibility to govern India under its federal polity is shared by the Central and State governments. This has occasionally caused friction in the Centre-State relationship and has therefore inevitably led to a continuing debate regarding either the enhancement of the Central control over the States or the dilution of its authority so that the States may enjoy a larger measure of autonomy. The debate was forcibly suppressed during the Emergency which stifled the freedom of expression. It has been restarted by Sheikh Abdullah and Jyoti Basu and is likely to catch up with greater vigour because of the ideological differences between the political parties in power in the Centre and the State of Kashmir and West Bengal. Sheikh Abdullah in his press conference held in New Delhi on 29th January, 1978, has again

forcefully pleaded for the greater devolution of power to the States and has even suggested the extension of Article 370, under which the State of Jammu and Kashmir enjoys special status, to other States as well.

In view of this national debate on the problems of larger autonomy to the States and Centre-State relationships it seems appropriate to examine *de novo* if in the light of advancing technology and changing geography, we can have an alternative to the federal political system of the country which, while retaining its integrity and political unity, will lead to a more decentralised democratic system of government, will take democracy to the grass root level, will allow a more balanced and equitable social and economic development of the

country, and will provide ample scope for the regional languages and cultures to flourish

We have adopted a federal constitution for India and reorganised our States on a linguistic basis in order to provide the maximum opportunity to the various linguo-cultural regions to develop their own ethos and economy within the national framework. In this process we have created such small States as Goa and Pondicherry which contrast sharply with such large sized linguistic States as Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. While the smaller States with small populations and meagre natural resources show a greater degree of dependence on the central government, the larger States with diversified resources desire a larger measure of autonomy and freedom to shape the development of regional economy and regional culture.

The linguistic States are not free from social and economic tension. They include within their territories distinct sub-cultures which feel choked under the pressure of the dominant culture of the region and therefore demand autonomous territorial existence to manage their own affairs. The intensity of the feelings of these sub-cultures was amply demonstrated in the movement for a separate State of Telengana in Andhra Pradesh in 1969. This separatist movement also reflected the latent feelings in most other sub-cultures within the larger linguistic States.

This demand is further supported by the fact that small States, even of the size of districts in the larger States, do exist within the federal polity of India. Moreover, the direction of drift in the present political situation of the country may once again create a favourable political climate for encouraging demand for small States which eventually may be difficult to resist. This will of course be disastrous as the creation of these multiple of small States with their inevitable and expensive ministerial and gubernatorial paraphernalia will throw our economy out of gear. We are certainly not in a position to waste our scarce monetary resources on

such non-remunerative items of expenditure

Economically, the linguistic States have failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people. The economic disparity between the developed and backward regions in most of the States has further widened. The powerful kulaks and entrepreneurs of the developed regions have successfully influenced the investment policy of the government and of the banks to suit their interest. Thus, the disparities in the levels of development have rather continued to grow and this agonising process cannot be mitigated under the existing political system.

It is an unfortunate fact that the linguistic States have encouraged linguistic jingoism and have prevented the emergence of a national ethos. The people of each linguistic State tend to take more pride in their own regional language, regional culture and are more concerned about the development of their own region. Because of these divisive trends, the national perspective is being completely ignored and every problem is being viewed from the narrow regional angle. Regionalism has gone so deep into the body politic of each State that even such minor issues as the fate of Belgaum and Chandigarh or the distribution of river waters are viewed emotionally and never rationally.

In the field of education, linguistic regionalism has shown its most ugly face and rabid form. One does not deny the efficacy of the regional language as a medium of instruction, but its erroneous implementation is adversely affecting the economic interests of the student community of the State. While English is an alien language, it is nonetheless a great asset. It is a powerful vehicle of communication at the international level and has internationally become the second language of the non-English speaking world. It is through the medium of this language that the scholars in India keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in their respective areas of specialisation.

To reduce the importance of the English language at the post

graduate and research level will imperil the progress of the country in the field of science and technology. And this is precisely what the linguistic fanatics are attempting to do. The whittling down of the standard of English has immeasurably damaged the standard of education at the post-graduate and research levels. The insistence on regional language as the medium of instruction at the post graduate and research level will deprive our educated youth of an opportunity to find employment in the national and international employment market.

The more disastrous effect of this policy in the field of education will be to encourage inbreeding in the centres of research and higher learning in each State. The universities will thus be forced to recruit scholars for the teaching faculty from within the region and therefore cannot look for the best talent available in the country. The regional language medium policy at the university will undermine completely the idea of national integration and national ethos.

This regionalisation of the total gamut of one's life and the complete absence of national perspective will generate an intense demand for a larger measure of autonomy at the State level. The growing ambition of powerful leaders in the State find the restriction and curtailment of their power and authority by central intervention exasperating. They crave, therefore, for a larger share of power. There is an increasing possibility that the States will eventually succeed in getting a larger measure of autonomy, reducing the central control over the States to the minimum. Will this larger measure of autonomy serve the interest of the people, lend political stability and accelerate the pace of social and economic development? In short, will it serve the national interest?

Although we are living under a democratic political system, it is unfortunately heavily weighted against the illiterate poor who constitute over 70 per cent of the population. The system works in favour of politically dominant

minority groups consisting of the industrial entrepreneurs and the rich peasants. These dominant minority groups control the political and administrative machinery in each State. It is these powerful groups which can financially provide support to the prospective candidates to fight elections.

These vested interests have powerful lobbies at the State legislature and therefore do not allow such legislations to be enacted which are inimical to their interests. Even if these are enacted, their speedy and effective implementation is prevented. Moreover, the bureaucracy which has to implement these programmes also belongs to the same class and is therefore sympathetic to their interest and consequently reluctant to move fast. The present democratic system is therefore working against the landless labourers, the poor peasants and the industrial labourers whom it is expected to serve.

Because of the federal polity in India we are subjected to a dualistic system of administration. We have the State sectors and central sectors in every important aspect of the social, political and economic life of the country. This dualistic pattern is so deeply entrenched and so widely spread that sometimes we wonder if we are living in the same country for we have different salary scales, rates of Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance, City Compensatory Allowance etc., for the employees of the State and Central Governments for the same type of job in the same town. In view of the higher salary scales for the employees of the Central Government there is a growing demand to establish a larger number of new all-India services such as medical, educational etc.

Consequent upon this dualistic system, the union government has failed to develop a national economic policy which will be uniformly applicable to all the States of India. The country has no well defined industrial location policy. Because of this dualism of sectors we occasionally observe the absurd situation when industries in the central sector bargain for better terms with the

State governments. The central sector industry gets eventually located in the State which offers the best terms irrespective of its economic feasibility and desirability.

The federal polity of the country has encouraged dualism in our political and economic system which has accentuated tension and friction in the State-Centre relationship. This perpetual state of tension will encourage divisive tendencies and hence will not be conducive to a healthy and vigorous national development. The situation now calls for a revolutionary change in the political and administrative set up of the country. The technological revolution which has overtaken India can be effectively used to establish a decentralised democracy, but a well knit unitary political, administrative and economic system in India.

The improvements in the communication system and transportation network have transformed the geography of the country, have annihilated distances, have brought together diverse lands and cultures of the country and have knit them together into an integrated unit. There is no part of the country which is more than 3 hours of jet-flying distance from one another. Excepting for the north-east and the isolated west coast, the super fast trains have made the national capital accessible to even the remotest corner of the country within 40 hours. The telephone system has reached every district headquarters in the country. The rapidly developing television network in the country will finally bridge the gap among the peoples and cultures of India.

We are very close to achieving the national electric grid system which will enable the surplus in Bhakra Nangal area to be transferred to the deficit areas in other parts of the country. We are also contemplating the national river grid system so that the surplus in one area is utilised to meet the needs of the water famished areas in the country. The technological advances in India have advanced the frontiers of shared culture and we are on the threshold of achieving a truly

national culture in India. It may thus be noticed that the technological advances in the country are leading us towards the formation of a truly well linked national political and economic system. This, however, is being prevented by the political overlords in the States as they fear the erosion of their own power and care little for the interest of the people. Modern technology is, therefore, being grossly misused to centralise greater power in the State capitals.

The country, therefore, needs a political system which, while eliminating the existing dualistic system of government, will allow democracy to percolate down to the grassroot level and where the people will genuinely feel that they have a share in the management of the country. We want a system where the government will be more responsive to the needs of the people and where the political leaders and bureaucracy will be able to communicate directly with the people they are expected to serve. We want a system where the kulaks and the entrepreneurs will not be able to form a powerful lobby at the State or national levels to exploit the poor peasants and the industrial workers.

This may be feasible if the federal structure is replaced by a unitary system, the States are abolished and the district is made the basic political and administrative unit of a national system of administration. The modern system of communication which is being effectively used to centralise political and administrative powers in the capital cities of the States can be used with equal effectiveness to decentralise it. The telephone, teleprinter and wireless network can establish instantly the link between the district headquarters and the national capital.

In this new set-up as conceived here, the district will be directly represented in Parliament, and will also constitute a planning unit communicating directly with the Centre. The Centre will be directly responsible for the development of each district and can therefore adopt a more rational and scientific strategy for its development in order

to reduce disparity between the developed and the backward districts of the country. This will lead to a serious effort on the part of the national government to encourage micro (district) level integrated planning. A truly national policy on planning will thus emerge.

This set-up also visualises a rational regrouping of the districts at the micro, meso and macro levels without the gubernatorial and the ministerial paraphernalia of the existing political set-up but with a considerable degree of decentralisation of administrative, financial and planning powers at each level.

This change in the political system will need a change in the administrative set-up as well. The district administration may have to be democratised with a considerable measure of financial and administrative autonomy which will be guaranteed by the Constitution. The administration of the district will have its Development Authority which will be the only agency responsible for the integrated development of the district. The problems of the backward countries including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities can be viewed in their proper perspective at the district level and be dealt with more comprehensively and satisfactorily by the District Development Authority.

There will be no bar to the development of the regional languages and regional culture and the three language formula can be more effectively applied to the district level. In fact, this will lead to a more healthy and rapid development of the regional language which at the district level will be the language of its administration.

While we have envisaged in this note a wholesale reorganisation of the national political system, we cannot ignore the key role which the national capital will play in this reorganised set-up. The national capital will symbolise the national ethos and will reflect the wants and desires of the nation, its strength and weaknesses, its aspirations and achievements, its

cultural diversity and dignity in adversity. The capital of India which should be the nerve centre of the nation and should reflect its culture-mix should be shifted to a more central location which is notably marked for its confluence of cultures. Despite its historicity and the halo that is built around it, Delhi because of its peripheral location in a mono-cultural area fails to fulfil its legitimate role as a national capital. If Delhi is eliminated, then the choice lies between Nagpur which is the geographical centre of India, and Hyderabad, which besides its high degree of centrality in the net-work system of India, is already a crucible of Indian cultures.

The transformation of the federal polity of India into a democratised and decentralised unitary system will, on the one hand, eliminate divisive tendencies and, on the other, maximise economic development and reduce socio-economic disparities at all levels. The abolition of the States of India and the emergence of the districts as the planning, administrative and political units of the country will transform radically the political, social and economic setting of the country. The foci of social and economic development will shift from the State capitals to the district head-quarters from where the developmental impulses can effectively trickle down to the village level.

The bureaucracy will owe loyalty to a single national government and the people of India will look towards this national government to solve the problems of their agonising backwardness and appalling poverty. There will be no State and central sectors, no concurrent and State list, and no central and States' services. All these anomalies will vanish and will give way to a well articulated and highly democratised national system with distinct but well coordinated national policies on education, administration, industrial and agricultural development, etc. The plurality of Indian culture will flourish but it will be subsumed by a broader national culture and will be perceived in the national context.

Cooperative federalism

D H A R M A V I R A

THERE is a lot of talk about Centre State relations these days. In fact, the Chief Minister of West Bengal has distributed a pamphlet suggesting certain sweeping changes in the Constitution in the apparent belief that these will bring about better Centre-State relations. Before we examine this matter, it would be desirable to go into the genesis of the so called States of India. Before Partition, there were no States in India except the princely States. The country was divided into convenient administrative areas which were called 'provinces'.

Normally, it is the States which come together to form a federation, and in the process divest themselves of certain powers which they pass on to the federation. In India, the process of the formation of the federation was just the reverse of the normal. Here, it was the Centre which converted the old administrative areas, some times recast, into States and calling them that. It shed numerous central powers to enable the States to function effectively within the four corners of the Constitution of India. We should, therefore, be very clear in our mind that the States are the creation of

the Centre and not the Centre the creation of the States and that the present States in the country are only of recent creation. All talk of greater powers to the States and the domination of the Centre over them should be viewed in this context.

The framers of independent India's new Constitution were firmly convinced that it should be such as would ensure the territorial integrity of the country. They were convinced that if the Centre became weak, the country would fall apart. The lessons of our past history corroborate this conviction. Under a federal form of government, they therefore set about ensuring that the Centre's authority in the ultimate should be overriding.

The present Constitution is applicable to the whole of India and has been described as quasi-federal and quasi-unitary. It may be useful to examine some constitutional aspects of the Centre-States relationship. Laws passed by the State units are subject to disallowance by the President on the advice of State Governors. There is only one

single citizenship. The Centre has exclusive jurisdiction in the Union list of subjects and its laws prevail over those of the State units in the concurrent list. The Centre can assume to itself the legislative and executive powers of the State units in an emergency. Also, there is only one single judicial hierarchy and not two — federal and States — as in the American Federation. The Constitution can be amended only by the Centre, at times even without reference to the units. Its superior power is unfettered by the State units. It was never the intention that the State units should be sovereign. In fact, every care was taken to emphasize that they were not.

It may in fact be correct to say that the States to a great extent continued to be convenient administrative units which could be created, modified, altered and even abolished at the will of the Central Government without consultation with the States.

But, to what extent the Centre was to exercise its superior powers was a question to be decided upon in the light of the situation obtaining at the time

It should be borne in mind that the frame of the Constitution was designed to counteract any divisive forces that might jeopardise the solidarity of the nation. In the light of that consideration, three legislative lists were provided. These lists have a rational basis. The Union or Federal list comprised subjects of wide and general interest such as defence, currency, taxation, communications, foreign affairs and the like, subjects which are necessary for the preservation of the integrity of the country from external as well as internal pressures and to give a predominant voice to the Centre in matters of all-India interest.

The State list related to subjects of local importance, such as education, health, developmental activities, law and order, industry, etc. In matters contained in that list, the States have the fullest measure of autonomy. The third list, the concurrent list, was intended to

cover matters which were country-wide in character, of interest both to the States and the Centre and in which from time to time in the interest of uniformity of action, Central direction or even legislation might be desirable

Between those three lists was found the entire gamut of legislative activity in the country. But, the basic fact underlying it all was the necessity for a strong Central Government, without however any intention to smother the States' power, initiative or progress, provided the units functioned within the frame-work of the Constitution. It is important to realise here that this third list, viz., the Concurrent list, was intended to emphasize the need for co-operation, adjustment and accommodation as between the Centre and the States and between the States themselves. The suggestion to abolish this list would be fraught with great danger to the functioning of the Centre and the States in an atmosphere of cordial and cooperative endeavour.

Upon this co-operation, adjustment and accommodation alone depend the successful carrying out of the functions and obligations under the Constitution, not only in ensuring economic and social justice to the people of the land but also in preserving internal amity and maintaining external security.

The framers of the Constitution realised the possibility of governments of differing political complexions in different States, and the consequent probability of difference of opinion. It was for this very reason that careful provision was made for the settlement of differences that might arise. Article 131 of the Constitution and the entire part of the Constitution consisting of Articles 256 to 263 are relevant in this connection

The essence of Centre-States relationship is, however, cooperation. In fact, the Indian Constitution may well be described as Co-operative Federalism. The States would ensure absolute compliance with the laws of Parliament and avoidance of any activity aimed at obstructing the executive power of

the Centre (Arts. 256 & 267). Article 257 even authorises the Union to issue directions to State governments in this and in some other matters

In its turn, the Centre would guarantee protection to every State against internal disorder and external aggression and would arm itself with the necessary powers to ensure this. Here experience has shown that with law and order being exclusively a State subject, the Centre has some difficulty in discharging its obligations in regard to internal disorder. This came to surface when at one stage the United Front Government in West Bengal questioned the Centre's right to post units of the Central Reserve Police in West Bengal to preserve law and order in that State

Similar sentiments have been expressed by some other States recently. The Centre has to discharge its obligation to preserve the integrity of the country from external as well as internal pressures. However, some adjustment between the Centre and States in regard to this matter appears to be called for. The Centre should at no stage appear to be attempting an armed occupation of a State

The Constitution has also made provision for the Centre to entrust to the State Governments functions in respect of certain matters to which the former's executive power extends (Art. 258). Correspondingly, Art. 258 authorises the States, with the consent of the Union Government, to entrust functions to the Union. Article 261 ensures that full faith and credit shall be given throughout the country to public Acts, records and judicial proceedings of the Union and of every State and that the final judgements or orders delivered or passed by Civil Courts in any part of the territory of India shall be capable of execution anywhere within the territory. Articles 262 and 263 enable the President to provide for adjudication of disputes relating to river waters and for setting up of a Council to enquire into, investigate and advise upon disputed matters between States and between the Union and the States

In matters like safeguarding the security of the country, internal disorder, and preserving a balance as between region and region in respect of finance, communications and the like, the States enjoy a considerable measure of autonomy and there is no reason why mutual consultations should not be helpful in solving any problems that arise in regard to any particular State or between the States. The important thing is to strike a balance between centralised control and the initiative of the States

Thus, it is seen that there should be really no conflict either in ideology or actual functioning. Consultation and negotiation between the Centre and the States are the base on which national solidarity is to be built. What is called for is an abiding faith in, and steadfast loyalty to, the Constitution

The Governor, as appointed by the President and as the Head of the State, acts as an important link with the Centre, although there are also direct dealings between the Union and the State governments. The Governor has a special responsibility to keep the President informed if there is a threat to the security and order of the State or there is a breakdown of the Constitution so that the union may discharge its functions of 'protecting every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of the State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution'

During the two decades and more of the Federation's existence, many doubts about its initial Constitution have been raised

- 1 Whether we were right in having a constitution based on the Westminster type of parliamentary democracy? Would a constitution based on the presidential type of parliamentary democracy not have suited the Indian genus better? The unsettled conditions witnessed in some States through constant defections highlighted these doubts

- 2 Was it right to have the linguistic States. Have we thereby not helped divisive forces by creating language barriers? Are the sizes of many of the States not too large thus giving to them inflated ideas about their importance vis-a-vis the Centre? Would it not therefore be desirable to recarve the map of the country to create multi-lingual moderate sized States?
- 3 Have the States been kept too dependent on the Centre to enable them to satisfactorily discharge their obligations to their people, and if so, should more powers be given to them?
4. If more powers are to be given to the States, should that be done by changes in the Constitution or otherwise?

It may be too late now to make sweeping changes in the Constitution or to recarve the map of India, but it should be possible to have a look into the causes that produce strains between the Centre and the States with a view to removing them so far as may be practicable. The Setalvad and the Rajamannar committees went into this matter in some detail but they approached it from diametrically opposite ends. The Setalvad Committee proceeded on the assumption that the basic constitutional fabric must remain unchanged and within its four corners steps be taken to promote efficiency and national integration. The Rajamannar Committee on the other hand was set up to suggest suitable amendments to the Constitution to secure to the States the utmost autonomy, though at a later stage a rider was attached — 'that this should be done without prejudice to the integrity of the country as a whole.'

I personally am in sympathy with the approach of the Setalvad Committee. There is sufficient scope in the Constitution to enable the States to fulfil their national and economic objectives. What is needed is not more powers but the will and ability to do work for the good of the

people. So long as that will and dedication are not there, no constitution, whatever its nature, will be able to deliver the goods. Today there is no crisis of Constitution in our country. The crisis is one of character of those who are expected to work the Constitution

These days the Centre and all the States have more or less stable governments. We can, however, not forget the ugly incidents of defections and counter defections of 1967 which practically shook the very foundation of our Constitution. Steps will have to be taken to ensure that such practices do not recur in the future. A committee of jurists had in regard to defections suggested that it should be made obligatory that any legislator desiring to change his party allegiance must resign and seek a fresh mandate from the people. It is understood that a bill on the subject will soon be introduced in Parliament. The sooner steps are taken to deal with this obnoxious practice, the better it would be for the functioning of parliamentary democracy in our country.

It would also be worthwhile to go into the various matters which lead to misunderstandings or strains between the Centre and States. I have already mentioned one, viz, maintenance of internal order. Others which have come to notice are

- 1 Resources.
2. Licensing of industries.
3. Role of the Governor.
4. Settlement of disputes between the States and the States with the Centre.

The problem of resources in a developing economy is a constant headache to the States. Most of the sources of revenue left with them, with the exception of sales taxes and excise, have reached saturation point and are not flexible. The problem of raising further resources has become practically insoluble. Most of the elastic sources of revenue have been retained with the Centre. For the purpose

of giving to the States their share in that revenue, the Centre appoints a Finance Commission every five years.

Unfortunately, the world does not stand still over a period of five years and many unforeseen additional requirements arise within that period for which the Finance Commission could have made provision. Desperately do the States commute between the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission, very often only to listen to lectures on financial prudence and economy, resulting in considerable frustration and even irritation.

The five-year Finance Commission system has in my opinion outlived its utility. There should be a permanent Finance Commission with annual allocation to the States. When it is established, it will have to be considered whether there should also be at the same time a permanent Finance Commission or whether the functions of the two could be merged. The establishment of a permanent Finance Commission, with annual allocation of resources, should considerably reduce the differences between the States and the Centre in the matter of resources.

The Centre should also bear in mind that prior consultation should be held between the Centre and the States in matters involving financial repercussions in the States. Most of the financial difficulties of the States, besides their own extravagance, have arisen out of such decisions by the Centre — particularly in regard to additional D A, emoluments of government servants, etc. It should have been possible to hold consultations with the States in these matters. It is no use saying that the Centre will not be responsible if the States get into trouble as a result of increased D A, etc., to central government servants.

Licensing of industries is another great irritant to the States. Most States are naturally anxious to industrialise rapidly particularly to tackle the rising problem of unemployment. The Central licensing system at present is too rigid and time consuming. It takes years to

decide even the smallest things and there are so many departments and obstacles to surmount that the whole business becomes very tiresome and frustrating. Leaving aside the private entrepreneurs, even the State application for industrial licences suffer the same fate. Surely the procedure can be simplified and liberalised to obviate these irritations. It should also be possible to give more powers to the States in this matter.

The role of the Governor has been the subject of considerable interest and controversy during the past many years. The time is over when the post of Governor was considered a sinecure for political pensioners, inconvenient politicians or aging civil servants. It is now obvious that the Governors of States should be chosen with great care and should be people who in times of emergency are able to deliver the goods. Some years back, under the President's directions, a committee of Governors was appointed to advise on the role of Governors and also to look into the question of providing guidelines for them to ensure uniformity of action in identical situations.

But, the fact is that identical situations are rare and hence the Committee rightly came to the conclusion that no guidelines could be provided and that on each situation the Governor concerned would have to take his own decision. The misunderstanding, however, arises because the States consider the Governor to be the agent of the President and thus, indirectly, the agent of the Council of Ministers at the Centre, on whose advice the President is expected to function. In the circumstances, what is the guarantee of the objectivity and impartiality of the Governor and how can it be ensured that in his hands the interests of the State are secure, particularly during the period of President's rule.

The Governors' committee rejected the doctrine of the Governor being the President's agent categorically and stated 'The Governor as head of State has his functions as laid down in the Constitution itself, and is in no sense an agent of the President.'

Even in a situation where the Government of a State is taken over by the President under Article 356, the Governor does not by virtue of anything contained in the Constitution become an agent of the President.'

The question is how to make this very brave assertion of the Governors' Committee a reality. A Governor holds his office at the pleasure of the President. The President acts on the advice of his Ministers and hence any Governor who offends the Central Ministry would be in danger of removal or transfer on the advice of the Council of Ministers. How then can the President be assured that a Governor will act impartially and will look after the interest of the State entrusted to him? Is the Governor expected to have any loyalty to the State whose Head he is supposed to be and, if he feels that the State's interests are jeopardised, has he the right and the duty to speak out?

Under President's rule, the Governor, besides being the Constitutional Head of State, is also the chief executive — the entire ministry rolled into one. In such a situation, has he any responsibility to the people of the State or has he to look for directions in every matter to the ministries at the Centre on the plea that he should do so because, after all, during President's rule the Central Government is answerable to Parliament for what transpires in the State? All these questions have to be clearly sorted out if further misunderstandings are not to grow between the Centre and the States, on the role of Governors.

Lastly, there are the disputes between the States and the Centre, which sow and nurture the seeds of trouble. The Constitution has a provision for the settlement of the disputes about water. The Centre can establish a tribunal to go into a dispute in regard to waters and its verdict is binding. The Tribunals, however, take too much time and this results in a minor dispute becoming a confrontation. Steps should be taken to evolve a procedure to speed up the functioning of these tribunals.

For resolving the other disputes, the Centre has resorted normally to the setting up of commissions presided over by eminent people. The trouble about these commissions is that they are not tribunals and their recommendations are not binding. As soon as their reports are out, political pressures develop and both the States as well as the Centre succumb to them. Consequently, either the report is modified much to the dissatisfaction of the parties concerned or it is shelved, creating much frustration and bitterness between the parties.

It is important that disputes such as the boundary and water disputes should be resolved speedily and the Centre as the arbiter should take an objective and impartial position in regard to them. They should not be permitted to become festering sores in the body politic of the country, unnecessarily poisoning the entire structure.

The Constitution makers did envisage such disputes. In article 263 they made a provision for the setting up by the President of an inter-State Council to inquire into and advise upon inter State disputes but one wonders if a permanent body of this kind will not encourage disputes to multiply instead of solving them. In any case, being only an advisory body it will suffer from the same disabilities as the commissions suffer from. The fact is that objectivity, impartiality and speed are the crux of the matter in these disputes and unless these are forthcoming no machinery will prove satisfactory.

Since the coming into being of our Constitution 27 years ago we have had:

1. Three major and one minor wars;
2. two large influxes of displaced persons from Pakistan;
3. recarving of State boundaries on a linguistic basis,
4. a big upheaval on the question of language,
5. occasional, but not serious, threats by some of the States and demand for more powers for the States by some others;

6. a very serious food situation in the sixties, and

7. the ugly scenes of defections and counter defections in 1967 which practically shook the peoples' faith in the suitability of the Westminster type of parliamentary democracy for our country.

Thanks to the political sagacity of our people we have survived all these trials and whilst all round us in Asia as well as in Africa, the newly liberated countries are plagued by military and other coups, our country is steadily marching on the road to progress and endeavouring to give a fair deal to every section of society in the country. Thus, the Constitution has passed the test of time as well as of trial. There is no force in the loose talk about making drastic changes in the Constitution or weakening the Centre by giving larger powers to the States.

Our past history is a warning against any such procedure. There are adequate provisions in the Constitution for settling all matters provided there is full cooperation, goodwill and the spirit of give and take between the constituent parties. No number of fresh provisions will help if that spirit is lacking or is absent. This is however a two way traffic. Just as the States are expected to work with a sense of responsibility and cooperation, similarly the Centre should also function in a purely objective, impartial and democratic manner. No considerations other than the overall interest of our people can or should be permitted to operate, if the unity of the country is to be preserved and the march of the nation to progress is to be maintained.

All points of irritation and misunderstandings between the Centre and the States which are, as stated before, not many or of very serious dimensions should be resolved speedily in order to obviate their being unnecessarily magnified. Above all, it would be very unfortunate indeed if faith in the impartiality and objectivity of the Centre is destroyed, because that will endanger the very foundation of the structure of our Constitution.

Preserving the balance

K C PANT

THE debate on Centre-State relations at any given time tends to reflect the configuration of political power in the country. But it is not possible to do justice to the issues involved if their consideration is unduly coloured by the prevailing currents. After independence the Congress ruled at the Centre and in the States right upto 1967, with the sole but important exception of Kerala which voted the Communist Party to power in 1957. The dismissal

of the Kerala Government led to a lively, but short-lived, debate. After the 1967 elections, however, the debate became more strident and more sustained.

So long as Congress ruled at the Centre and the States, the leadership of the party was in a position to resolve, or at least contain, the concrete and practical issues that cropped up. There was no occasion for Centre State tensions to surface

as an issue of public controversy. But once non-Congress governments took office in a number of States, the debate was not confined to practical matters; the very distribution of powers between the Centre and the States came to be questioned

The impetus for the sharpening of the debate at the present juncture is provided by the acquisition of power in some States by regional parties like the Akalis, the AIADMK and the CPI(M). These parties are firmly committed to the devolution of more power to the States. This is an important plank of their political strategy — a fact which lends an air of political inevitability to their posture. However, one is left wondering as to whether their whole approach would not undergo a change in the unlikely event of their coming to wield power at the Centre. Some of those who stand for a strong Centre today were clamouring for stronger States in 1967

Our founding fathers deliberately opted for a Union rather than a Federation. The residuary powers rest with the Centre. Their concept of a strong Centre is not antithetical to the existence of strong States. Indian history provides a standing warning against allowing Central power to become weak. If our Constitution is viewed in this light, it appears as a document which seeks to be flexible but not so flexible as to weaken national unity and integrity.

The argument for decentralisation in a country as large and diverse as India has obvious force. Development — economic and social — is the sum total of the myriad responses of the system to the needs of the people at the local level within a broad framework of policy. As an aid, if not a precondition, for development, therefore, the process of decentralisation cannot stop at the level of State capitals; it must reach the grass-roots and ensure living contact with the people. The whole question of decentralisation, administrative, economic, etc., has to be viewed in its totality. To limit it to a scrutiny of powers and functions between the Centre and

the States is to lose sight of the end objective of decentralisation.

We have all along talked about people's participation in our planning processes. This is the time to examine seriously how we can create the necessary machinery and the infrastructure so that planning could move up from the district to the national level and down again from the national to the district level. This machinery should also ensure effective implementation of our plans and policies

The States are hard-pressed for resources and it is therefore natural for them to seek an enlargement of their fiscal powers. Their problem, compounded by ever-increasing indebtedness, cannot be argued away by pointing out that the Centre too is hard put to find adequate resources for discharging its responsibilities, including Defence. The Centre's revenue resources can be grouped into three major categories: revenue collected from Income and Corporate taxes, revenue from customs and the revenue available from the collection of excise duties. Presumably, in demanding more fiscal powers, the States are referring to the third category — revenue from excise duties. There need be no objection to a dispassionate and rational examination of this question, but decisions in this regard must conform not only to the national needs but also national goals and objectives

The real problem is that of raising more resources for the country as a whole and utilising them for developmental purposes, whether by the Centre or the States. A change in the mechanism of the Finance Commission by itself is not going to add to the pool of resources. The low rate of savings and investment in the economy is as much a reflection of the basic poverty of our country as of the limitations imposed on taxation by the pressures of relatively well-to-do groups who know how to use the levers of the democratic system. In any review of the distribution of fiscal powers, the greater exposure of the States to direct pressures of this kind should also be taken into account

An important aspect to be borne in mind is the need to prevent imbalances in economic development. Poor States will become poorer unless a deliberate effort is made to help them out. This is one of the central tasks of national planning. But there are many other objectives, inherent in the march towards a free, egalitarian society, which can only be attained through central planning. One may sometimes quarrel with the manner of functioning of the Planning Commission, but there can be no question of doing away with national planning. It is strange that some who are votaries of centralised planning in theory, want to dilute it in practice in India. Perhaps their view would change if they came to power at the Centre. Any discussion on the role of the Planning Commission should not do injury to the hard core of functions with which it is entrusted.

Article 356 has been the object of much heated debate. It is not impossible to cite instances in which the ruling party has interpreted this Article too freely for its own ends. The most flagrant case of misuse of Article 356 was for the dismissal of nine opposition governments in 1977 when there was neither a break-down of constitutional machinery, nor a loss of majority, nor a mass upsurge against the governments in those States. The phrase 'or otherwise' in Article 356 which can lead to mischief certainly needs a second look. While there is no gainsaying the need for a provision of this kind in the Constitution as a drastic measure of last resort, past experience of the application of Act 356 calls for the incorporation of some safeguards against its misuse

It is sometimes argued that the Centre wields disproportionate power vis-a-vis the States. In practice, however, the limits of this power are determined not so much by the provisions of the Constitution as by the realities of the equations of power. It is a function of relative political strength. Looking back, I can recall at least one instance to substantiate this point.

Some years ago, a State Government wanted to adopt a flag of its own and fly it alongside the national flag. The central government of the day had to use all its tact and levers of persuasion to prevent the State Government from proceeding with its plan. There was no question of using Article 356. In such situations, the limitations of the much-vaunted political power of the Centre stand exposed.

Another sensitive area is the use of the Central Police Force and the army. The principle that central forces should not be used in any State except at the invitation of the State Government, is unexceptionable. But here too I can recall at least one instance in which rigid adherence to this principle posed very serious practical problems. The law and order situation in and around the Durgapur Steel Plant was getting out of hand during the first UF regime in West Bengal. The State Government and its police refused to intervene even when officers were beaten by cycle chains. The police actually saw this happening in some instances but looked away. Ultimately, the General Manager was gheraoed for hours. The central government had to warn the State Government that the situation had become intolerable. The State Government could only think of one method of rescuing the luckless General Manager. He was 'arrested' and whisked away by the police in a police van! However well-concerned the provisions of a Constitution, their spirit can be preserved only if the Centre as well as the States observe the rules of the game.

Another important issue is the demand for transferring more subjects from the Central and concurrent lists to the State list. The only rational criterion for changes in these lists is the functional one. In at least one area, the nation has been the loser because of the over-zealous protection of their supposed interests by the States. Inter-State disputes have held up the utilisation of the waters of many an inter-State river. Both irrigation and power generation have suffered. Delays have added to the cost of projects.

It is in the national interest to ensure the development of river basins in their totality, regardless of the artificial boundaries between States. This may call for change in the Constitution or fresh Central legislation or both.

Discussion and dialogue are a part of the democratic process and readiness to persuade or be persuaded is the very essence of the democratic spirit. Constitutions are man-made and they must be capable of responding to changing situations. Rigidity in rejecting a discussion on Centre State relations can be counter-productive. But it has to be ensured that in any such discussion the interests of the nation as a whole must prevail.

The fact that we have entered a phase in political development in which one-party dominance has ended and different parties hold sway in different parts of the country, has its own logic. This could be a long-term trend. In this situation of plurality of ruling parties in the country, a far greater measure of tolerance, patience and readiness to readjust would be needed to preserve the basic unity of the country. This would call for a continuing dialogue for the building up and strengthening of a healthy structure of conventions and mutually-agreed safeguards, which can best preserve the delicate balance among the States of the Indian Union and between the Union and the States.

The central question is how the States can be made a more effective agency for the welfare of the people and it should be the objective of the national dialogue to find the answers. The notion that strong States can be built on the foundations of a weak Centre is untenable. Indeed, judging from the experience of modern government, particularly in large countries like ours, and of the compulsions of modern technology, the trend is unmistakably towards a stronger Central authority. This applies as much to the USA as to the USSR or to China. But in the complex situation of India, we should ensure that the balance is not allowed to tilt too far either way.

Debate, any one?

ASHOK MITRA

IN the course of the past twelve months, one has come across some of the weirdest reasonings to justify the avoidance of discussions on the issue of reviewing Centre-States relations. Consider, for example, this one: since it has not been done during the past quarter of a century and the polity has nonetheless somewhat survived, there could be no particular occasion for doing such a review now. Because a certain essential chore has not been performed in the past is hardly an argument for not doing it; historical circumstances and objective factors must be taken into account here. Or consider the other one: it would be nothing short of *lese majeste* to alter the existing constitutional arrangements. A Constitution, which is on the point of being amended for the fortyfifth occasion, should be able to stand the strain of a fortysixth amendment!

A related point can be whether such changes in the Constitution would alter its basic structure. Many would in fact regard the proposed alterations as contributing to the strengthening of this basic structure. The Constitution refers explicitly to the Government of India as being a Union of States. There could have been no Union at all if there were no States in the first place, there is a certain absurdity in presuming the existence of a Union without at the same time conceding the prior existence of the States. The same Articles of the Constitution which are the progenitors of the Union also mention the States; one can thus legitimately argue that the States are at least co-equal to the Union. If some susceptibilities are hurt by the utterance of such home-truths, little, I am afraid, can be done about it.

That the issue of Centre-States relations has suddenly come to the fore is a homage to the transforma-

tion in the political milieu. For the first time since Independence, the ideological diffusion of political power has, all over the country, assumed a striking form. A situation like this had tended to emerge, *albeit* partially, in 1967 too, it was however not as sharply delineated as it is now, and in any case that situation did not last long.

The collapse of the Congress Party and its wholesale rejection from Central authority has introduced a qualitatively different element into the picture. For the first time, the States feel at liberty to assert their specific views and need not look back over their shoulder in trepidation, for the first time, no domineering personality is at the helm of affairs at the Centre whose very presence would inhibit the style and modality of thought of those in charge of administration in the States. It is thus possible for individual States to articulate openly what would have been near-heresy barely a year ago.

And, yet, the demand for the realignment of Centre-States relations is hardly a matter of casually trying out a freedom which has been of late bequeathed. Fundamental issues are involved, namely, whether the existing constitutional arrangements are conducive either to stability or to rapid economic growth. The answer in the view of some of us, has to be in the negative. A large number of political, economic and juridical questions need sorting out through amendments to the Constitution before the country can cohere or progress satisfactorily. This conclusion is neither prejudice nor dogma, but what has emerged through the filter of experience spanning over nearly three decades.

On one point, it is best to be categorical. The Indian nation, to which we are all bound by historical, political and emotional ties, reflects the simultaneous existence of two

separate, parallel sets of consciousness. There is, of course, the consciousness of Indian nationhood, the consciousness which stems from the sharing of a corpus of ethos and literature, of history and tradition, of legends and fables. But, simultaneously, there is the consciousness associated with the reality of local nationalities. Who can deny that alongside with his Indian ethos and consciousness, each citizen of this great country, also carries with pride and joy the consciousness of a separate linguistic-cum-cultural ethos which can be described as the consciousness belonging to a nationality? Woven into the tapestry of the Indian nation, there is at the same time a Malayalam consciousness, a Gujarati consciousness, a Tamil consciousness, an Ahom consciousness, and so on

Economic and social progress, it can be argued, will gather both speed and coherence if these nationalities are made the focal points for all developmental and administrative activity. This would imply offering cognisance to nationality in the structure of administration. Not to do so would be to invite tension, a point which becomes obvious once issues concerning economic growth are brought to the fore. In a country which embraces 550,000 villages and hundreds of towns and cities, and, at the last count, flaunts a population of more than six hundred million, to build on an overly centralised structure of economic administration would be to take a holiday from common-sense.

This truth, one suspects, was perceived in some manner or other by those who drafted the Constitution. Going by the evidence of the famous State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, in the sphere of the social and economic development, the State Government is acknowledgedly the leading entity. It is supposedly responsible for education and public health, for the development of transport, for agriculture, for water supply, irrigation and drainage, for land and land tenures, as much as for the regulation of mines and minerals development. Even more noteworthy, in the matter of industrial growth, too, the States are assigned the principal

role under Entry 24. True, this is subject to the constraints exercised by Entries 7 and 52 of the Union List, which assert that industries necessary for the purpose of defence or for the prosecution of war were to be excluded from the State sector, and further that Parliament can in the public interest reserve some industries for the Union.

These provisions nonetheless do not contradict the view that the Centre would come into the picture only at the margin, and, so far as developmental activities — including industrial activities — are concerned, the State governments would be the major entity. This is a far cry from the situation obtaining today, when a State Government cannot even lift its little finger to discipline a wayward industrial unit over which the exercise of control can be only by the Union Government. Whether the Industrial (Development and Regulation) Act or the MRTP Act or the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, the Centre is the sovereign decision-maker, and the States can merely watch from the sidelines.

Money talks. Much of this distortion has been brought about by the financial provisions of the Constitution, aided and abetted by some additional skullduggery performed on the part of the Union Government during the past quarter of a century. While the Constitution generously burdened the State governments with duties and obligations, including economic obligations, the bulk of the revenue items it kept reserved for the Union. The proceeds of income tax, basic excise duties, taxation of foreign trade — that is to say, of each of the principal tax heads — are to go to the Central Government, trifling items such as sales tax, tax on motor vehicles and entertainment tax, are left to the care of the States. True, land revenue and taxation of agriculture are within the domain of the States, but, given the nature of the tenurial arrangements over large parts of the country, it would have been idle to pretend even at the time of the Constitution that these could raise much revenue.

The incongruities in the Constitution apart, much worse has been

the manipulation of the definition of income tax and the exclusion of corporation income from the purview of the latter. This was done to get around the inconvenience caused by successive Finance Commissions in allowing four-fifths or more of the total proceeds, from income tax as part of the divisible pool of resources which the Constitution suggested the Centre needs to share with the States. In today's reckoning, the redefinition of income tax has implied an annual deprivation of the order of Rs. 1,500 crores for the States.

Another ploy indulged in by the Centre is the imposition of the so-called surcharge on income tax. Under article 271, this surcharge — non-sharable with the States — is leviable ostensibly for special purposes of the Union, but this has now been rendered into a standing device and spread over practically the entire spectrum of the income tax regime, so much so that another Rs. 500 crores is lost annually to the State governments.

Since the surcharge is not for sharing with the States while the realisation from the income tax is, the Union Finance Ministry has in recent years been pretty consistent in its strategy to lower the rates for basic income tax but, at the same time, to expand the hegemony of the surcharge. It is cheating, indulged in pretty unabashedly. And, if you are a constituent of one of the State governments, you are not supposed to ask under what constitutional provisions the Centre has decided to keep for itself, exclusively, the proceeds from the gift tax or the tax on the interest earnings of banks.

It is necessary to draw attention here to the course of events following the passage of the Additional Duties of Excise (Goods of Special Importance) Act 1957. The Act compelled the States to surrender their constitutional right to impose sales tax on textiles, tobacco and sugar. These were lush revenue items, but the Centre insisted that the centralisation of these sales taxes, in the form of an additional excise duty, would effectively eli-

minate evasion and thus lead to improvements in receipts, which are to go entirely to the States. This has not come about, for the Centre has not cared to raise the rates of additional excise duties on these three items for several years running and the States lost a considerable order of potential revenue.

During the period 1971-72 to 1975-76, West Bengal's share of additional excise duties increased by only 67 per cent, while the State's sales tax receipts moved up by 136 per cent; if only the States were free to exercise their power to levy sales tax on textiles, sugar and tobacco, many among them would have been able to realise much more. What has been worse, whenever an occasion has arisen to accord any bounty to the sugar barons or the textile tycoons or the multi-national companies infesting the tobacco sector, the Centre has indulged in such bounty exclusively at the expense of the State governments by lowering the rates of additional excise duties.

Finance Commissions have been recommending that 20 per cent of the collection from basic excise duties should enter the divisible pool. Even that paltry proportion has obviously been considered too much by the Centre, which is perhaps why we have increasingly witnessed in recent years the phenomenon of auxiliary and special duties which are not shared with the States.

One can multiply such examples, Article 269 lists a number of items on which duties and taxes are to be levied and collected by the Union Government, but which would be assigned to the States in full. This includes taxes on railway fares and freight. During the 1950s, there was a tax on railway passenger tickets, the proceeds of which went to the States. In 1961 the tax was abolished on the understanding that the States would be fully compensated for the resultant loss of revenue. The amount of compensation was placed at Rs 16 crores in the mid-sixties; it remains so today despite the fact that the volume of railway passenger traffic has increased enormously in the course of these years and, taking

into account the factor of inflation, the total earnings from the sale of railway tickets must have jumped seven to eight times or more.

The sum total is that the broad division of revenue as between the Centre and the States — twentyfive-odd States considered together — is in the ratio of 3.5 : 1. Article 275 envisages a situation where individual States may continue to lack in resources necessary for carrying on essential functions, and the Finance Commission was specifically enjoined to remedy the situation through a system of grants in aid. But since the orbit of the Finance Commission has been narrowed by re-defining tax heads and by similar other devices, as well as, more specifically, by constricted terms of reference, roughly not more than Rs. 1,500 crores are currently transferred each year as per the recommendations of the Commission to the State government with a total kitty of Rs. 17,000 to Rs 18,000 crores over which it remains sovereign.

Two consequences have followed. First, every five years there has been the unedifying spectacle of individual State governments trying to obtain a larger share from out of the measly sums which is the prerogative of the Finance Commission. It is a free-for-all, and the special pleading indulged in by each State to advance its cause — and at the expense of others — has invariably reminded one of the rude, crude state of society. The inter-State squabbles which have ensued have been corrosive of the very concept of Indian unity and have encouraged crass parochial emotions. Those who argue that excessive dilation on the theme of a realignment of Centre-States relations would be corrosive of national unity should ponder over this particular matter.

In the second place, after each Finance Commission has given its award, a number of States have continued to feel the fiscal pinch, the inevitable outcome has been begging-bowl missions to the Centre. The latter, naturally, has come to the role of benefactor extraordinary. As a result, the discretionary transfers under Article 282 of the Constitution are now twice as much as

what the State governments receive annually in terms of the award of the Finance Commission. "Pace the so-called Gadgil formula the manner in which these transfers are rendered is the product of decision on the part of the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission, which too is an appendage of the Union Government. No use beating about the bush; political exigencies have more often than not dictated these transfers. Those who have been conformists — willing to listen to the Centre and do its bidding — have been showered with dispensations, on occasion, funds have also been transferred in anticipation of favours expected to be rendered.

In contrast, recalcitrant States have been given short shrift. Economic criteria have fallen by the wayside; whoever has been a willing partner of the manipulative politics indulged in by those in charge of affairs at the Centre has run away with a disproportionately larger share of the resources available. And those who have not fallen in line have been at the receiving end of the Centre's wrath.

This is no abstract proposition, but can be proved by quoting examples from the murky history of our country since the early 1970s. With such vast resources at their disposal, those in authority at the Centre have felt no compunction to expand the defence and the police forces, the para-military apparatus and the intelligence network, in some instances, they have not even flinched from hiring goons with the funds at their disposal to quash political dissidence in this or that State. A kind of multi-collinearity was thus set in motion. As more and more funds got diverted toward such forms of wasteful expenditure, less was available for purposes of economic development.

With the resultant lowering of the rate of economic growth, there was an intensification of popular discontent, to curb such discontent, an even higher proportion of the over-all revenue was diverted for sharpening the instruments of repression, with further deleterious consequences on the rate of economic

growth. Does not this sum up the national situation, more specifically during 1972-75? The constitutional provisions were such as to act as a built-in accelerator of the trend toward authoritarianism.

This narration would also explain why some States have forged ahead while others have not. In a fair number of cases, merely the disparity in the rates of growth as between different States encapsulates the social reality of some States being on the 'proper' side of the Centre and some other States being on the 'improper' side. And those who have been led to believe that the Centre's prerogative for discretionary transfers is essential to protect the interests of small and economically weak States should be disabused by I.S. Gulati's finding that these transfers have further tilted the balance against the weaker States: it is the non-weak who have systematically inherited the resources.

If we have to reverse all this, the financial provisions of the Constitution need to be redrawn *in toto*. No tinkering will be of any avail here, because one cannot honestly pretend that the tilt in favour of the Centre, so far as fiscal arrangements are concerned, is a subjective development. This development could take place because the Constitutional provisions have been such as to make it possible, for instance, the legislations which re-defined the ambit of a tax or sanctified a larger role for the Centre, were all done in terms of the Constitution. The fact that the States have no independent scope of augmenting their revenue through market loans, or no say over the affairs of a bank even when it may make or mar a State economy, is again a consequence of the Constitution as it is. If we want a more balanced diffusion of economic powers, we thus have to go back to the Constitution, take a long, hard look at it, and change and prune whatever needs to be changed and pruned.

So it ought to be with respect to the distribution of political powers. Beginning with the dismissal of the Nambudripad ministry in Kerala in 1959, there have been

by now nearly 40 instances where the Central Government has got rid of popular ministries and elected legislatures in the States, Articles 356 and 357 could not be handier. These illegitimate acts have been done in terms of the constitutional process, which makes the President's pleasure the ultimate arbiter of the content of democracy, the President's pleasure is the pleasure of the Central Cabinet, and if the Indira Gandhi view is to prevail, the pleasure of the Central Cabinet is the pleasure of the Prime Minister.

This specific constitutional provision is an affront to the whole concept of the Union being a Union of States and would suggest that the States are no better than vassals whose separate national consciousness or linguistic and cultural personalities need not be respected. More than any others, it is these provisions which if left unchanged, are likely to sow the seeds of dissidence in the country and give rise to the danger of disintegration. To avoid even the hint of such a possibility, once more we have to go back and amend the Constitution.

Apart from the absurdity of persisting with a legacy left behind by the British through the Government of India Act, 1935, in a federal structure there should be no scope for a Concurrent List. Morarji Desai would not seemingly do anything to cure the scourge of unemployment in the immediate period, yet, taking advantage of the Concurrent List, he would try to prevent State governments from offering unemployment allowance to the rural and urban poor. The long arm of the Centre has not been unwilling to reach out in matters which concern the State List too: the bizarre delay experienced by the Government of West Bengal in obtaining presidential assent to the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill passed in the State Legislature would indicate that the provisions of Article 201 are altogether corrosive of the federal spirit and need to be expunged.

All these constitute a formidable agenda. Not all the issues can be resolved at one go. But the point

at issue is whether there can be at least an agreement to discuss, at various levels and forums, these issues without rancour or pre-conceived notions. The Prime Minister or no Prime Minister, through the effort of some people a debate on the problem has been joined in the different sectors of national life. The committee of the National Development Council, supposed to go into the question of re-ordering the division of national resources between the Centre and the States so as to ensure that the States can cope with the increased responsibilities which the draft Sixth Plan document assign to them, is a recognition of this reality.

It would be useful if the Union Government were to participate fully in this debate and contribute its counsel. An ostrich-like stance, for example, that no discussion at all is called for on the issue, could be the biggest folly that could be perpetrated by anybody in the present temper of the Indian polity. And here one need not even rub in the point by quoting chapter and verse from the Janata Party's election manifesto waxing eloquent on the need to decentralise power as well as decision-making.

What is called for is a frame of mind to appreciate the other point of view, a frame of mind which would accept that just as the Centre occasionally runs up an uncovered gap of more than Rs. 1,500 crores which has to be met by the printing of treasury bills, State governments have much greater reason to run up overdrafts with the Reserve Bank of India, a frame of mind which would agree to examine, at least as an hypothesis, that Indian economic growth has been disappointing in the past quarter of a century because of the centralised structure of economic and fiscal administration, a frame of mind which would condescend to analyse the proposition that economically strong States do not lead to a weak Centre, but precisely the opposite.

There would be troublesome days indeed for the nation if this frame of mind turned out to be a rare commodity, and more so in the nation's capital.

Historic necessity

RAJNI KOTHARI

UNDERLYING all the pettifogg-ing headlines appearing every day in our unmistakably free press — inducing anxiety in some, exhilaration in some others, bewilderment in most — is one simple fact. This is that for several years now we have been too preoccupied with symptoms to give thought to the causes of the malaise we have been in. Unless we deal with the deeper sources of the petty fumbings and loathsome dramatics of our political operators, there is not much of a future for this land of otherwise immense potential and vast capabilities.

The central point in coming to grips with our political reality is a lack of fit, indeed a major hiatus between our institutional set-up and the democratic ideology it is supposed to serve. There is a wide — and widening — gap between the exercise of authority and the presumed structure of the polity, between the wielders of power and the people in whose name it is wielded, between the centres of decision-making and the location of groups, communities and regions affected

by the decisions.

A central dilemma informs the nature of democracy in India. It is reflected more in people's perceptions and expectations than in the institutional framework through which it operates. Almost twenty years of sustained democratic functioning (1950-69) were followed by periods of rapid twists and turns: a short but decisive period during which the style and idiom of Indian politics were radicalized (1969-72), followed by a period of deep disenchantment and mounting discontent (1973-75) producing in their wake a torrent of protest, then of a sudden suspension of the political process, its dramatic restoration and subsequent stagnation.

Lacking a fundamental reconstruction, such a succession of periods of expectation and let-down has contributed to a quickening of mass perceptions without a commensurate increase in elite capabilities. Intense periods of political mobilization of rural areas, the youth and diverse streams of social activists have led to a wide dispersal of awareness and

an incipient assertion of will against age-old structures. Yet, at the top there is apoplexy, isolation and lack of will and élan. In a word, the super-structure of the polity has been found lagging far behind its base

Such a lag in perceptions and capabilities of the governing elite has contributed to widening distance between the rulers and the people and an accentuation of various gaps in the system. While the vast majority of the population is to be found in the rural areas and small and medium-size towns, almost all the decisions that affect them are taken in a few metropolitan centres. It is not surprising therefore that while both the last Congress and the Janata governments announced welfare policies (e.g., in health, education and housing) aimed at reaching the rural masses in forms they needed and could afford, in reality the distribution of resources and talents has continued to be in the reverse direction.

Nor is it surprising that agricultural prices and other policies that lead to either sudden glut or sudden scarcity of commodities are all influenced far more by urban middle class opinion than by the interests of the producing classes. A little inflation is far more dreaded than massive unemployment and underemployment, agitations of central government employees for D.A. increases are far more successful than demands for fixation of rural wages, pressures for maintaining metropolitan lifestyles are far more effective than arguments for increased investment in rural public works and development projects for raising employment and incomes of the rural poor.

Such a picture of dissonance between what needs to be done and what is actually done is usually presented in the form of stupefying statistics. We are told that disparities are on the increase and the percentage living below the poverty line keeps rising. And the analysis of and disputations about the size of these maladies get ever more sophisticated in the hands of our university and World Bank based economists, making us all so despondent and hopeless

The point that is lost in all this is that the middle class professionals occupying positions of influence and engaging in the sophistry of statistical and policy analysis have, like their counter-parts in the bureaucracy and the political parties, perpetrated a huge hoax on the people of this country in the name of fighting against poverty and inequality as if these were abstract and technical magnitudes that could be technically fixed without reference to the location and distribution of political power.

The educational system has produced a class that has a vested interest in keeping power and decision-making concentrated in a few urban centres. It has also thrown up a mass of free-wheeling youngsters which on the one hand inflates the ranks of the bureaucracy and on the other hand provides large cadres for political agitations of all types, including organized banditry and violent slogan-shouting at street-corners, outside the courts and both inside and outside legislative bodies.

Both the induction of these new status-seekers within the system through the patronage of those in power and their induction as mercenaries for propaganda and terrorism from the outside lead to one common result: they keep the focus of attention and activity in the large cities, above all in the capital of India. And it is from here that trained noises about poverty and inequality in rural areas and in backward regions are emitted, the blame fixed on 'vested interests' in these areas, and fervent pleas are made for modernization and 'mobilization' of the masses. What is sidetracked in such holistic exercises is the central issue in all systems where gaps are widening and the development of some is based upon the underdevelopment of many, namely, who makes and enforces these decisions and through what modes of power and influence.

The widening gap between classes and regions and our continuing state of underdevelopment have, no doubt, been matters of much concern to our leaders and intellectuals. It has in the past led to two main sets of prescriptions. For

quite some time after the discovery of widening disparities in living conditions of our people in the fifties, the main thrust of prescriptions was redistributive through land reforms, ceilings on incomes and wealth, and fiscal measures without disturbing the general framework of the strategy of economic development

Towards the end of the sixties a different strand of thinking emerged which, while it did not underplay the importance of redistributive measures, found the development strategy itself faulty, or at any rate necessary to shift. It emphasized the need to move towards an alternative framework of economic policy which, among other things, focussed directly on the creation of employment and incomes of the rural poor. Both the early pronouncements after the 'garibi hatao' election of 1971 and the election of March 1977 emphasized the need for an alternative model of economic development (though both also kept up the redistributive goal alive)

Unfortunately, both the redistributive and the alternative development perspectives, though undoubtedly political in their overall objective, are highly apolitical and technocratic in their policy prescriptions. They both rely largely on policy pronouncements and their legislative and administrative implementation without however *simultaneously changing the constellation of interests and the distribution of power in society*. There is need therefore for a third and more basic approach to the achievement of a just social order which, without detracting from the other two objectives (redistributive policies and an alternative economic strategy aimed directly at improving the condition of the poor), makes them part of a more comprehensive approach to the development process.

In moving towards such an approach, it is essential to grasp that the course of economic development is vitally determined by the structure of political power, that both the general misdirection of development strategy and its inequi-

tous consequences owe a great deal to the immense concentration of authority in a small elite at the apex of the system. This has always been so. It is inherent in our constitutional framework (despite laudable 'directive principles'). But its politically undemocratic and socially exploitative character were held in check in the first long phase of nation-building when an enlightened paternalism at the top (under Nehru) was combined with a significant assertion of authority at lower levels, thanks to the considerable stature and popular base of State and local level leaders and the highly open and plural character of the Congress Party.

With the passing of the 'tall men' of Indian politics who occupied positions of authority at so many levels both inside and outside government, and with the gradual closure of the political process within the Congress and the undermining of State, and local level and other autonomous institutions under Mrs. Gandhi, the centralizing tendencies inherent in the Constitution which was based on the Westminster model came to the fore. With this there took place a strong convergence of vested interests that supported such a structure of power — the bureaucracy, big business, the professional middle class, police and intelligence agencies, and political upstarts mouthing progressive slogans and in their name constructing an undemocratic, exploitative and repressive structure of State power.

The Janata government could well turn out to be another mixture of democratic declarations and undemocratic practices, perhaps a little less by design than Mrs. Gandhi's government. In its case the chicanery of a few may get reinforced by the tomfoolery of many others (all those who seem to be equally afflicted by political ineptitude and an inflated ego) with the result that it may find its dream of holding on to the Centre no matter what happens at lower levels of the policy shattered by forces beyond its control, largely because it refused to wield power through a duly dispersed and yet cohesive structure of governance.

The political process in a plural and highly diffuse society of India's size can be carried on effectively and predictably only by operating through such a structure of governance. And it is only on the basis of such a political process that effectivity and predictability in the pursuit of larger socio-economic goals is also possible. Mrs. Gandhi failed to perceive this and despite enormous power at her command she was blown off her keel by the growing distance between her (and her court) and the rest of the polity which she thought she had suspended. And by the same logic her various pronouncements of socio-economic goals, from 'garibi hatao' to the 20-point programme, were either ineffectual or got distorted beyond all recognition.

The same can happen to the Janata cabal sitting in Delhi with enormous vacuum at lower levels and with a consequent increase in the distance between it and the people. The virtual suspension of government in one State after another following disputes over who constitutes the government, the violent disputes over definitions of backwardness, the snow-balling of atrocities on harijans and other lower castes by upper castes who feel insecure about their future but still feel capable of undermining the democratic process in rural areas — these are all symptoms of a more fundamental asymmetry in our political arrangements.

We have a half-hearted democratic framework, a centrally monitored federal set-up, an all India officialdom that overpowers representative bodies at all levels and centralizes relations between them, and a highly centralized party hierarchy in which both the composition and the continuation of State governments are at the mercy of the 'High Command'. (There is little difference here between the Congress and the Janata set-ups except that in the latter the pyramid is flatter at the top.)

Such centralization of the structure of power necessarily produces reactions to it in its own image. The growing tendency of directing

popular agitations, oppositional politics and group demands to the government in New Delhi is a direct consequence of the undermining of a plural and multi-tier structure of power.

The local and intermediate level buffers that were earlier available for absorbing tensions of all kinds¹ have been undermined following the rise of centralized politics with the result that just as loyalties and accountability are required to be directed to the Centre, resentments and confrontations also get centrally directed. With this the day-to-day load on the Centre has greatly increased, longer term perspectives and policy planning have been at a discount and, despite the striking infusions of fresh currents with every major election of late — 1967, 1971, 1977 — the polity has continued to be basically a stagnant pool for the last eleven years.

Such is the overall setting of the basic *problematic* of Indian politics, namely, the inequitous character of social change in a polity that claims to be democratic. It is against this setting that the issue of State autonomy within an overall framework of political and administrative decentralization needs to be considered. The issue of autonomy at lower levels of the polity has often been posed in too mechanical a manner, as if it was simply a matter of jurisdictional divisions between different territorial units. This has given rise to well-called for anxiety even among well-meaning people, as if a greater share of power and resources by the States will weaken the Centre and devolution of power still further below will encourage 'centrifugal tendencies', or that if some of the large States are split, the result will be disintegration of the country.

Perhaps, the proponents of decentralization have presented their case in a manner that gives rise to such anxiety though a good

¹ For a detailed discussion of such a model of politics characterized by 'intermediate aggregation,' see my *Politics in India*, New Delhi, Orient Longman and Boston, Little Brown and Co., 1970, pp 90-96, 126-139, 240-264, 420-428.

part of it follows from an aging leadership steeped in nationalist sentiment and western values that has not quite understood the compulsions of operating a democratic polity in a socially plural and regionally unbalanced society. What is lost sight of in the latter's understandable concern with preserving 'unity at all costs' is that a unity based on perpetuation of inequity and disparities is phoney and will give way before long.

The real case for autonomy rests not on the claims of territorial rights of juridical entities or political parties but on the comprehension, based on experience, that in a country like India a centralized polity is incapable of dealing with an unjust social order, that it is inimical to the democratic political process, and that it is inherently unstable.

The real beneficiaries of a centralized polity are those who have little regard for democratic norms (or believe that democracy and adult franchise are unsuited to a poor country): the managerial class, the technocrats, the English language press, large parts of the intelligentsia who get both their sense of power and their sense of potency from grandiose symbols of authority and national power. Left to themselves, these votaries of a centralized State would do away with politics as such, or at best limit it to a narrow game of personal ascendancy in which only the smart will survive. Not unsurprisingly, such people enjoyed the Emergency, used it to their personal advantage, and feel nostalgic about it today.

In point of fact, even the Emergency, which was the farthest expression of a centralized State we have had so far, proved highly unstable, never got institutionalized, and in the end (which did not take long) came down crashing — largely because it was too centralized and lost touch with the people. The Janata Government came to power on a mandate of decentralization. But its neglect of this dimension for so long seems to now make it nervous when forced by demands for greater autonomy at lower levels. In the meanwhile, the urban middle

class interests, which appeared to have taken a back seat for a while, have once again gained ascendancy and are found to press the old arguments for maintaining the status quo.

The most clever of these arguments, one that carries weight with many people (especially the intellectuals) is that the central government is more enlightened than the State governments and the State governments more so than local elected bodies which tend to be dominated by local vested interests and the upper castes. This is a clever argument because it smoothly papers over the vested interests and upper caste character of the elites at higher levels, it advances a progressive argument for perpetuating the status quo, and it subtly condemns the vast rural hinterland in which eighty per cent of our people live to a Hobson's choice surrender of political rights to higher level elites, or surrender of economic benefits to the local elite. One is reminded of one's colonial past: you can either have self-government or good government, but not both. In the new setting the assumption is that only the Centre can provide good government.

Evidence for this point of view is cited from stories about atrocities on harijans and the extremes to which 'casteism' goes when there is a tussle for power in rural areas. The much larger incidence of banality and violence in the cities, the large majority of the victims of which are the poor and the destitute, the systematic segregation of the harijan and lower caste bastis, the dastardly behaviour towards women and the indecencies hurled against the children of the urban poor, and the growing number of professional 'goondas' who are hired by the powerful and the well-to-do to terrorize and where necessary bump off rivals and enemies are all forgotten in this display of generosity and fair play towards the rural poor.

The point is that a splashing news story on rural repression fulfils the psychic need of newspaper editors and their patrons far more than does evidence of the rot around them. Also, any systematic analy-

sis of the latter will soon expose their own involvement in a system of privilege and exploitation that pervades the whole society. More important for the analysis presented here is the fact that the position of the poor and the weak in the rural areas will not improve so long as power and decision-making remain outside their reach. It is not until the levers of State power move downwards that the poor majorities can aspire to stake a claim in them and use it against their traditional exploiters. Concentration of power and resources at higher levels necessarily limits their availability at lower levels and therefore concentrates them there also.

The same analysis applies to the old argument, recently put forward by Morarji Desai, that increase in the power of the States will not improve the condition of the backward regions which is the responsibility of the Centre. Yet, what does our experience show? More than twenty-five years of centralized planning and decision-making has only widened regional disparities. To think that backwardness of backward regions can be removed without allowing them to take the vital decisions that affect them — which means giving them the power to do so — is to fly against all facts.

Incidentally, in making this point Desai forgets that the best way to ensure what he wants is to provide autonomy to the backward regions within the present large States by splitting the latter — a demand that he is opposed to. And yet this is precisely what Haryana and the North-Eastern States have shown after statehood was bestowed on them. It is simply wrong to expect that disparities in development, whether regional or between classes, can be rectified without involvement and participation of the people concerned.

We can now restate our basic analysis in a set of propositions

1. The Indian political system has been in a stagnant position for many years and now finds itself in a deadlock. Neither authoritarian nor the Westminster style

parliamentary democratic approach seems to work. The main snag in both is the centralization of the political process, intended and deliberate in one, innate in the other. No restructuring along an alternative framework of development is possible without opening up the democratic structure and moving it closer to the base

2. The existence of massive poverty has all these years been made an excuse for concentrating power and resources at the Centre, presumably because it could deal with it better. For some time, failure to do so was ascribed to local vested interests. Later, it was felt that the policies were not right and there was need for an alternative framework of policy. It is now clear that the biggest vested interests emanate from the nature of the Indian States and that no amount of tinkering with policy will change things. What needs to be changed is the nature of the State — and the statist assumption that the problems of the people can be resolved through the machinery of the State.

This statist assumption is in turn based on a fundamentally technological view of human problems. This is the view that deep-seated social maladies like pervasive poverty based on a *system* of deprivation can be removed by technological means only. We know that this is not true, that the removal of such deep-seated social maladies is an essentially political task, a task in which the people who are most affected participate in making the decisions that affect them. Building such a structure of participation is far more important for the removal of social and economic ills than are development programmes from above, no matter how well-conceived they are

Such a structure of participation is inherent in the democratic premise on which the Indian polity is supposed to be based. But the pre-existing State did not permit such a polity to evolve. It was a colonial State, drawing its authority from the masters and not from the people. This State still survives, even if in an attenuated

form. There is a new set of masters in command but many elements of colonial rule still persist and there does exist a measure of colonial relationship between New Delhi and lower down

4. To move towards a structure of democratic participation of the type discussed here necessarily involves changing the structure of the State. This involves a change in power relationships between the Centre, the States and lower down. Without such change, Indian democracy is bound to run into a deadlock and sooner or later flounder. The sway and power of charisma is in direct proportion to the lack of structure and institutionalization of the political process. Only a decentralized State can provide such institutional safeguards against the cult of personality and the role of charisma. *Everything seems to point to the need for decentralization. It is indeed an historic necessity.*

5. Is it possible to move towards decentralization without providing greater autonomy and commensurate resources to the States? I do not think so. Merely holding elections of panchayats and municipalities does not mean decentralization. They need to have significant power and resources to work with and they need to be organized vertically through functional interrelationships along various tiers reaching out to the State level. This is not possible without first (or simultaneously) endowing the States themselves with significant power and resources

6. There are two opposite temptations that the Centre and the States must respectively avoid. One is the Bismarckian notion of a direct appeal to lower levels without permitting intermediate structures to grow; the modern version of this is populism. The other danger is in the opposite direction, namely, the growth of regional overlords through the increased power of the States which is not shared further down. To steer clear of both these dangers, it is essential to agree that greater autonomy for the States is at once part of a larger process of decentralization

and an essential pre-requisite thereof

7. Two other corollaries are necessary in the Indian case. First, there is nothing sacrosanct about autonomy at the level of *existing* States, in many of them there is need to provide autonomy to important regions within the State by splitting it. Second, there is a genuine fear that the more prosperous and powerful States will benefit more from the process of devolution. This should at all costs be avoided. Indeed, one of the justifications of greater autonomy at the State level is that it will put an end to the present situation in which advanced States get the better of the others by virtue of their pull at the Centre. The new strategy should be to both allow a large measure of self-reliance at the State level so that hitherto untapped potentials are released — this itself will begin to narrow disparities — and at the same time provide transitional correctives by weighted allocations and transfers

8. Such corollaries only underline the ultimate aim of any democratic restructuring: enabling the people to participate in shaping their collective future. Political decentralization is only a means to this and federalism a means to that means. Institutional structures by themselves produce no change, so much depends on the interest, the vigilance and the organisation of the people themselves. But in the absence of an institutional structure that responds to people's initiatives, it is not possible to mount them. Indeed, institutional innovations designed to respond to historic needs from time to time provide the stuff of a dynamic polity. The difficulty with a functioning democracy is that it so much disarms the people that a revolutionary upheaval becomes difficult to mount. But the great thing about a functioning democracy is that it can itself become a vehicle of revolutionary change through structural changes in response to historic needs. And it can do this without an upheaval. But if it fails to do this for long, its future is in peril. Indian democracy faces this challenge at the present time

The vandal

O. V. VIJAYAN

I COME from two thousand miles 'down' South, from among the palms where the cross of the little peoples is borne. My little people once traded with the Moors, fought wars on the seas and made great music and dance. And they spoke a language, creating a culture as deep and classical as any.

Thus it is that when my people are made to learn the new language of the nation, I begin to sense uncanny things: the destruction of beautiful and defenceless languages, the miscegenation of sounds, genetic assaults. Perhaps I am wrong, and perhaps history still has its reprieves. But my sense of the times compels a deep pessimism. I recall the tragedy of Biafra, the Ibo peoples' fight for selfhood, and the faces of the dying Ibo children as they stared out of a cruel desert war.

But Biafra shall return, because of an abiding biological principle, that political structures of human societies must eventually break down into entities truer and more ethnic. Thus all peoples of the world are like my own little people in their need to live with their kind and to extend their compassion to others. The Irish Americans resurrecting their heritage, the Welsh speaking their language once again with pride, the Scots demanding a parliament, the Kurds and the Baluchis at war with their States: these represent today a world alternative — of men being able to live in truer and smaller societies.

Our national movement was carried on within such small communities. Freedom made sense that way in Kerala, in the Dravidian

homeland, in Bengal, and in the numerous communities of the North, in Avadh and Mithila and Mathura. Freedom would never be an abstraction if it was sought by a people who knew each other. With this history, we ought to have built, in our nation, a system of simple freedoms to live by. On the contrary, it is power we are building, it is territory we are acquiring. The nation has become an immense collective ego in which there aren't people any more.

One of the things happening in this freedomless becoming of a nation is the growth of a forced language. Hindi has grown without native speakers. It will be imposed on the South, but even its acceptance in the North is imposition of a kind. Because in Avadh and Mithila and Mathura, the villager is uninvolved in Hindi. But then he has also to declare Hindi his mother tongue. He has done so because his political leaders have communicated to him the dangerous ego of the large nation and a master race. This is unreal and vicarious, for he does not belong to that race but merely forms the base from which it operates. The master race is made up of the manipulators, the politicians and the compradore bourgeoisie. In their urgency to build this power base, they have created an internal colonialism. They degraded these many northern languages as dialects, even though these languages had far more phonetic personality than Hindi ever will, and written literatures too of considerable antiquity. These were cajoled into the marsh, and their speakers statistically annexed for the Hindi heartland.

This pursuit of power, this paranoid expansion, perhaps followed from the anxieties of the national movement itself. The leaders of the movement had to present a united front against the British. Not that it would have made much of an impression on the British, who in any case had made us a nation out of warring principalities. It can be argued that we might well revert to those wars of the principalities if we do not centralize. But the whole exercise of liberation was not just to grow out of political bondage, but to grow out of those wars as well. Hindi threatens to bring those wars back, if not physically, even more corrosively, spiritually.

That it was Hindustani that Gandhi had advocated makes no difference now, because Gandhi too was creating *one* language for the country. But Gandhi thought of more things than just language, and these concerned human freedom positively. What has come down to us as residue, however, is a degenerate Gandhian sanction.

The naive predications of the national movement have led to equally naive assumptions of nation-building. Thus, in a frightful foreshortening of historical vision we insist that to be a united people is to use a common language, that if we do not have a common language we set about creating one. Thus language becomes the instrument of power and not of freedom. In other words, the national movement has taken a road it was never supposed to take. It has passed me by.

The elite which employs Hindi for State ritual, and the masses who will never speak it but accept it as a totem, complement the heartland. Hindi was chosen not so much as a language people could be persuaded to learn and be linked by, but as one which would consolidate the heartland by means of chauvinism and artificial solidarity. 'It is chosen,' says the Report of the Official Languages Commission 'for performing the job of the official language medium on pan-Indian levels because it happens to be

understood and spoken, amongst the regional languages by the largest number of people. We are concerned merely with the prevalence of knowledge of the language in relation to the appropriate sectors of activity and the conclusive guidance relevant is the one to be obtained from the census figures.' Pan-Indian levels here are cliché and abstraction, and the census politically manoeuvrable, and the argument of numbers morally assailable.

Other nations have experimented with unifying national languages. The Soviets ostensibly have a linguistic commonwealth where every language is free and equal and the proletariat provides simultaneous translations, but in actual fact a number of small ethnic societies were dispersed and genetically swamped. The Israeli and Indonesian scales, compared to ours, are different. In the case of Israel, the scale apart, the experience beginning with the Diaspora and leading up to the creation of the modern Jewish State, is something for which we have no parallel. Even so, Hebrew dug out of its classic crypts is hurting no one, not the Russian settler, not the prosperous and confident American and European Jew. The Indonesians have a multiplicity of languages, and had they taken our logic of numbers they would have made Jawanese their national language. Jawanese is spoken by forty million, but the language had implications of social superiority and political advantage. Therefore, it was given the go by, and instead, Malay, with a mere six million speakers, was made the base of Bahasa Indonesia. And there is of course the Swiss example where three equal national languages coexist.

The Report of the Official Languages Commission is insensitive here; it goes on to make a bland admission that perhaps there aren't books available in Hindi, perhaps the language will not accommodate in the near future many of the disciplines necessary for contemporary knowledge. The Hindi heartland, for various historical reasons, has remained feudal and backward.

It is caste-ridden and its social paces slow. English, used not as a substitute but as a functional utility, could have secularised it. A paranoid Hindi-isation, on the contrary, will make it an enormous Indo-Gangetic atavism.

It is because of the unreality of its origins that Hindi still has not grown out of its sterile matrix. The heavy overlay of Sanskrit borrowal has not helped. It presents the curious spectacle of an imperial patois if one could imagine one, and ranged against this patois are a number of evolved languages. 'If in Europe we could conceive of Portuguese, Spanish and Catalan ceasing to produce literature,' says Sumit Kumar Chatterjee, 'and the speakers of all these accepting French as their main literary language, studying only French at school and reading and writing only French, and if on that basis we were to lump together the earlier (and even modern) literatures in all these languages and dialects as "French" literature, then we would be in an analogous situation for Hindi.' Only, I should like to add, the analogy is unfair to French.

Even when the British were here, they were not here to stay like the Dutch were in South Africa. The successor imperialism, the imperialism of Hindi, however, is one that is practised by a competing segment of the population. Much has been said about our continuing subservience to English. But English is no longer the language of the occupying power. Our subservience lies elsewhere, as was demonstrated by three of our prime ministers meekly concurring with the American Intelligence's need to plant a hazardous power pack in our snows.

To complete the bizarrerie, more than even the political thrust, Hindi's most massive medium seems to be the Bombay cinema. It seems becoming. We have known of only one way a democratic nation can be built, and that is in freedom. Hindi, unfortunately, has risen like the vandal over settled civilisations, and is showing us the dim road of the vandal.

Communication

ONE of the controversial features of the Indian Constitution is the Emergency powers conferred on the Union President. A federal government, according to Bryce, means a weak government as it involves the division of powers. Every modern federation, however, has sought to avoid this weakness by providing for the assumption of large powers by the federal government whenever unified action is necessary by reason of internal disturbances or external threat. But, in countries like the U.S.A., this assumption of powers by the Union is made possible through the liberal interpretation of the Constitution by the judiciary. In India, the Constitution itself provides extraordinary powers to the Union Government. The Emergency provisions in our Constitution enable the Union Government to acquire the strength of a unitary system without taking any recourse to constitutional amendment, whenever the exigencies of the situation so demand.

The effect that India's peculiar situation had on the shape of her federal system is nowhere more apparent than in the Emergency provisions of the Constitution. The partition, followed by repatriation of refugees, communal riots and a host of such other explosive situations compelled

the Constituent Assembly to debate over the necessity of arming the Union Government with some extraordinary powers in order to combat any threat, both within and without, to the security of the people and integrity of the nation. The prudence of the constitution-makers can be seen through their farsightedness in making some provisions to deal with all types of situations. The Constitution of India is subjective in the sense that provision has been made on every important aspect of governmental activity and civil life. For example, we can take such situations for consideration which are extraordinary, subversive, disruptive of government machinery or the society, or which are harmful for the defence of our borders.

The purpose of this article is to examine the implications and consequences of National Emergency (Article 352) only. The Constitution provides for these kinds of 'Emergencies' or abnormal situations which call for a departure from normal governmental machinery set up by the Constitution. Firstly, an Emergency due to external or internal aggression (Article 352). Secondly, failure of the constitutional machinery in the States (Article 356). Thirdly, provisions relating to financial Emergency (Art 360).

A proclamation of Emergency can be made at any time by the President if he is satisfied that security of the country or any part of the country is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance. It may be made even before the actual occurrence of any such disturbance, i.e., when external aggression is apprehended. A State of Emergency exists under the Constitution, when the President makes a 'Proclamation of Emergency'. The actual occurrence of war or any external aggression or internal disturbance is not necessary to justify a proclamation of Emergency by the President. The President may make such a proclamation if he is satisfied that there is an imminent danger of such external aggression or internal violence. The Courts have no jurisdiction to inquire whether the security of India has in fact been threatened or not. The 38th Constitution (Amendment) Act prohibits the courts to inquire into the validity of a Presidential proclamation on the ground that no Emergency did exist or exists in fact.

As regards the proclamation of Emergency, the satisfaction of the President is final and conclusive and shall not be questioned by any Court on any ground nor can the Court question the continued operation of the proclamation of Emergency declared Under Article 352.

Although the Constitution says that every proclamation made by the President shall require the approval of Parliament, Parliament has no power to restrict the continuation of Emergency to any time limit nor be able to recommend its withdrawal. The special feature of the Emergency provisions particularly with reference to Art 352 (of National Emergency) is that once Parliament by a resolution supported by simple majority approves a proclamation of Emergency (Art 352(2)) made by the President its termination is entirely left exclusively in the hands of the executive, so that it may continue indefinitely until the President thinks it fit to revoke his proclamation of Emergency.

Since the President acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister the 'satisfaction' of the President virtually becomes the satisfaction of the council of ministers. In effect, this becomes the prerogative of the Prime Minister. In this regard the President cannot differ from the Council of Ministers because among other things, the 42nd Constitution (Amendment) Act, specifically says that the President shall follow the advice of the Council of Ministers 'on all matters'.

So, the 'satisfaction' of the President is a 'subjective satisfaction'. But it is now a settled law that in order to arrive at such a satisfaction there must be some materials and facts in existence on which it is possible for a reasonable person to be satisfied that such an Emergency exists. Although the satisfaction of the President is subjective, his

subjective mind must be applied to the objective circumstances and facts mentioned in Article 352(1), namely, the existence of a grave emergency whereby the security of India or any part is threatened by war or external aggression or internal disturbances. If there is no war, no internal aggression and no internal disturbance, can the President proclaim an Emergency? This is a fundamental question relating to the emergency powers of the President under Article 352. To taken an example, if there are merely political bickerings or party squabbles, can the President declare an Emergency, under Article 352? If the Presidential declaration is wholly outside the scope of Article 352(1), can Parliament approve of such a declaration?

The first proclamation of Emergency under Article 352 was made by the President on October 26, 1962, in view of the Chinese aggression in the NEFA. The President also issued an ordinance Under Article 359, debarring an arrested or imprisoned person to move the Courts for the enforcement of any of his fundamental rights under Article 19 or 21. This proclamation of Emergency was revoked by the President on January 10, 1968. The second proclamation of National Emergency was made on December 3, 1971, when Pakistan launched an undeclared war on India. This was followed by the Defence of India Act, 1971 and the suspension of Fundamental Rights for a period of six months. Even after the Simla agreement, the Proclamation of 1971 was revoked only in March, 1977.

While the two preceding proclamations under Art 352 were made on the ground of external aggression, the third proclamation of National Emergency under the same Article has been made on June 26, 1975, on the ground of internal disturbance. Here it may be noted the third declaration has been made when the country is already governed by the second declaration of 1971 with all its extraordinary powers available to the Union Government. In fact, the last declaration of 1975 does not really amplify the power of the already powerful government, except that measures which might be criticised under the second proclamation at a time when there was no actual war or imminent danger thereof might now be justified on the ground of Internal Emergency. For instance, on the same day, the Government of India imposed press censorship of prejudicial information.

While the Emergency provisions of the Constitution give sweeping powers to the Union Government, the absence of any checks on their misuse or abuse has led to the subversion of democracy in order to institutionalise a total concentration of power in the hands of one individual — the Prime Minister. The horrors of Emergency era are too well known to need any recapitulation. The point however is how to safeguard the freedom of the people against the misuse of Emergency powers by self-seeking and power-lusting politicians?

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Firstly, the declaration of Emergency must be made subject to the ratification of Parliament not by simple majority but by a two-thirds majority of the present as well as of the total members of both Houses. Here one may ask the question that what if the Government does not enjoy such majority in Parliament when a declaration of National Emergency under Article 352 becomes inevitable on actual and genuine grounds? The answer is that Parliament will certainly approve such a declaration if it is absolutely essential in the event of actual or imminent threat to the security of the country notwithstanding the fact that the Government enjoys only a bare majority in Parliament. The approval of Parliament of the proclamations of Emergency both in 1962 and 1971 will bear ample testimony to the solid support given to the Government of India by Parliament.

Secondly, the Constitution be suitably amended to empower Parliament to review the Proclamation of National Emergency, at least once in the year. If it comes to the conclusion that the continuation of Emergency is no longer necessary, Parliament should be able to recommend its revocation to the President by passing a resolution supported by a simple majority. Here the discretion with regard to the Proclamation as well continuation of Emergency should not be solely left in the hands of the Executive. The President must share this power with Parliament, which is the legitimate symbol of the will of the people.

Thirdly, except under a special law enacted by Parliament during the proclamation of Emergency, the President should be barred from suspending fundamental rights of the people, especially the right to move the Courts for personal liberty. Justice Davis of the U.S. Supreme Court remarked in a well known case that 'No doctrine involving more pernicious consequences was ever invented by the wit of man than that any of its (Constitution's) provisions can be suspended during any of the great exigencies of government. Such a doctrine leads directly to anarchy or despotism'.

The life and liberties of the citizen should not be left at the mercy of the government. Courts should be allowed to decide petitions of Habeas Corpus even during the proclamation of Emergency, when the rights of the people are suspended by the Presidential proclamation under Article 359. It is apt here to quote the decision of Delhi High Court in Kuldip Nayar's case. The Court declared that, 'The rights to life and liberty did not spring into being with India's Constitution, but were basic natural rights given protection by the Constitution and the suspension of these rights did not remove them entirely'.

Fourthly, the judiciary should be given powers to review the provisions of Emergency. In this respect the first step is to repeal the 38th Constitution (Amendment) Act, which debars courts from

questioning the validity of a Presidential proclamation of Emergency. In this connection it may be noted that in the U.S.A., judicial review is effectively preserved at all times and the Emergency power is severely limited in point of time to the necessity that gave rise to it. Indeed, judicial review is all the more necessary in the Emergency. The U.S. Supreme Court has remarked that 'it is then, under the pressing exigencies of crisis, that there is the greatest temptation to dispense with fundamental constitutional guarantees which, it is feared, will inhibit governmental actions. The Indian Constitution enables the executive to bar access to Courts altogether for the enforcement of fundamental rights even if they are violated by laws wholly unrelated to defence and the Emergency can, apparently, last as long as the executive desires

That Emergency powers have been grossly abused in India is incontestable. The indictments of the International Commission of jurists, Amnesty International and the revelations before the Shah Commission conclusively point their fingers to the gross abuse of the Emergency provisions of the Constitution. 'The continued suspension of human rights, is causing concern in all parts of the free world where India had been looked upon as a bastion of fundamental rights and rule of law in Asia'.

In his address to the joint session of Parliament on March 28, 1977, the acting President, B.D. Jatti, said 'During the course of the year, a comprehensive measure will be placed before you to amend the Constitution to restore the balance between the people and Parliament, Parliament and the judiciary, the judiciary and executive, the States and the Centre, the Citizen and the Government, that the founding fathers of the Constitution had marked out. This will include provisions to amend Article 352 to prevent the abuse of the power to declare Emergency and of the relevant articles to ensure that President's Rule is imposed strictly with the objectives mentioned in the Constitution and not for extraneous purposes'.

No one denies the need to arm the democratic government to withstand any crisis caused by threats to the security of the country or its political system. But its strength lies in its powers being exercised in accordance with the law. A government with scant respect for law and with a penchant to use powers irresponsibly will ultimately result in a weaker government, for it acts not in accordance with the authority of law conferred by a free Parliament, but on its own capricious will. The approval of a captive Parliament is no justification for the blatant abuse of extraordinary powers conferred by the Constitution. If our democracy is to be sustained on healthy grounds all powers must flow to the government from Parliament even in times of war as in peace. 'Amidst the clash of arms' said Cicero, 'laws are not silent'.

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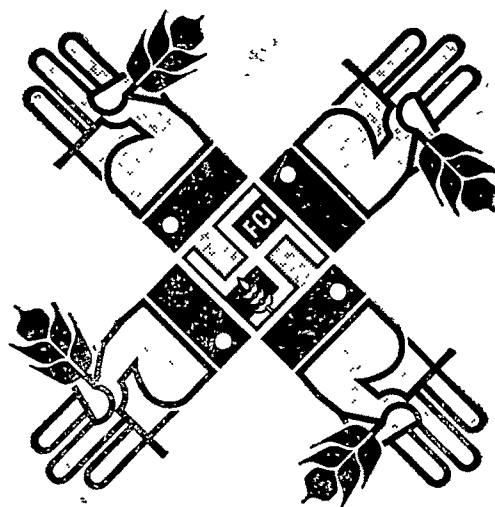
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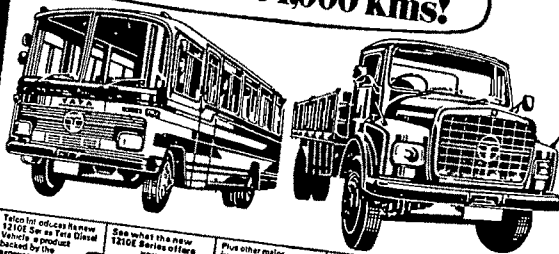
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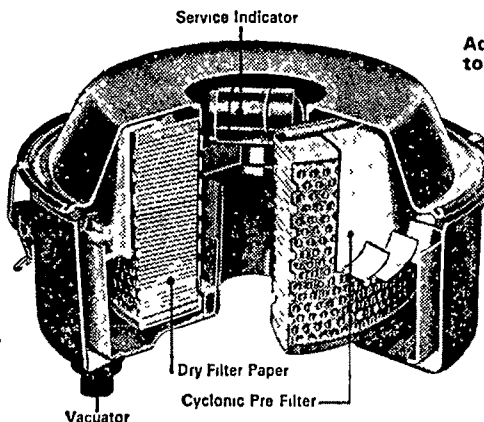
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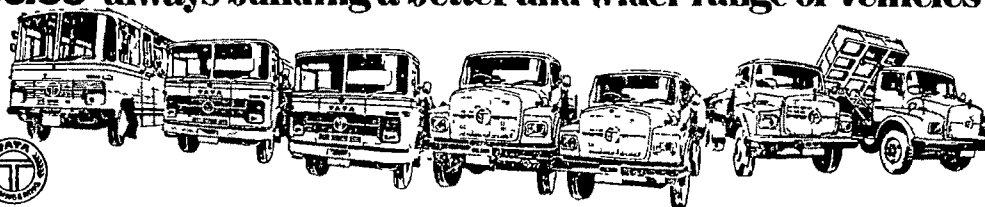
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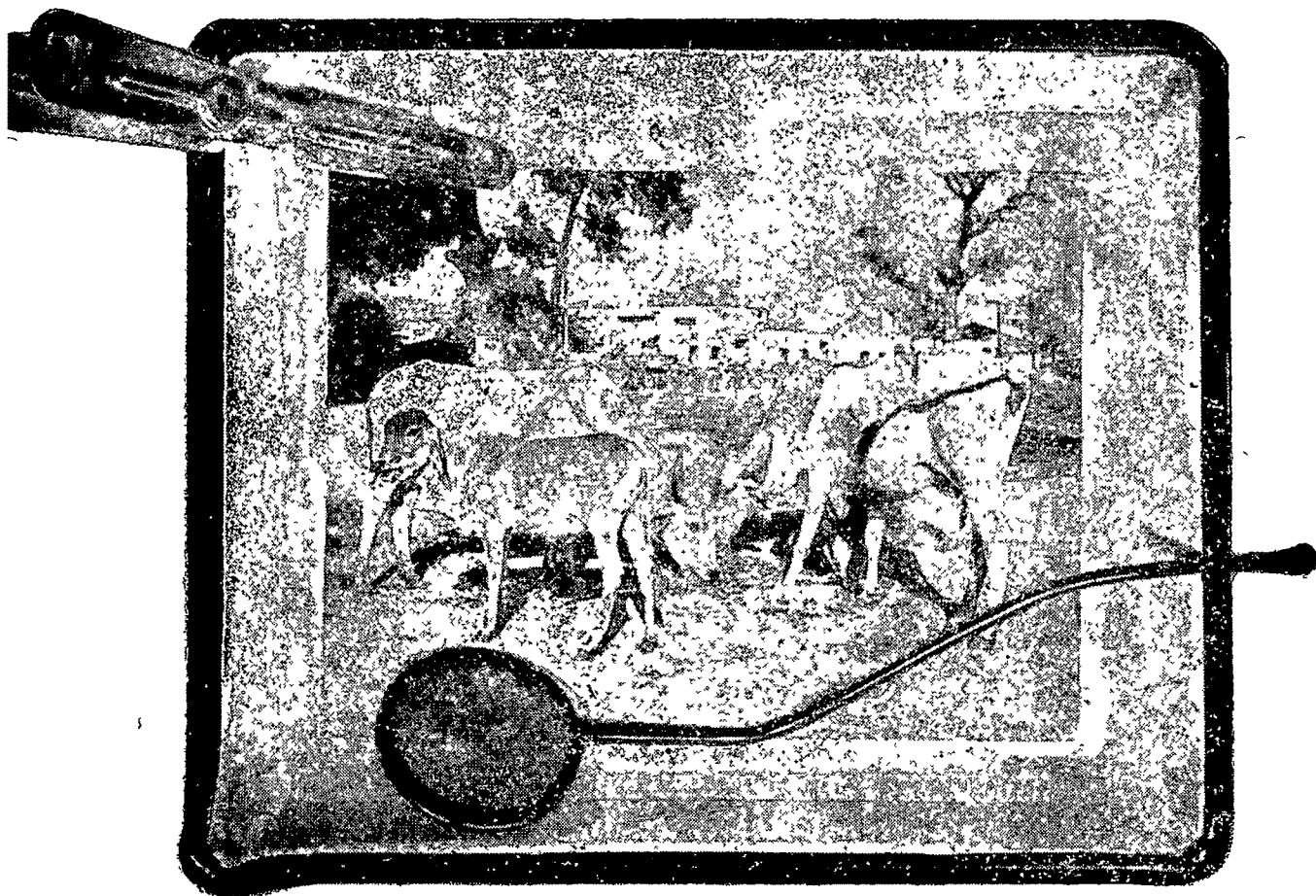
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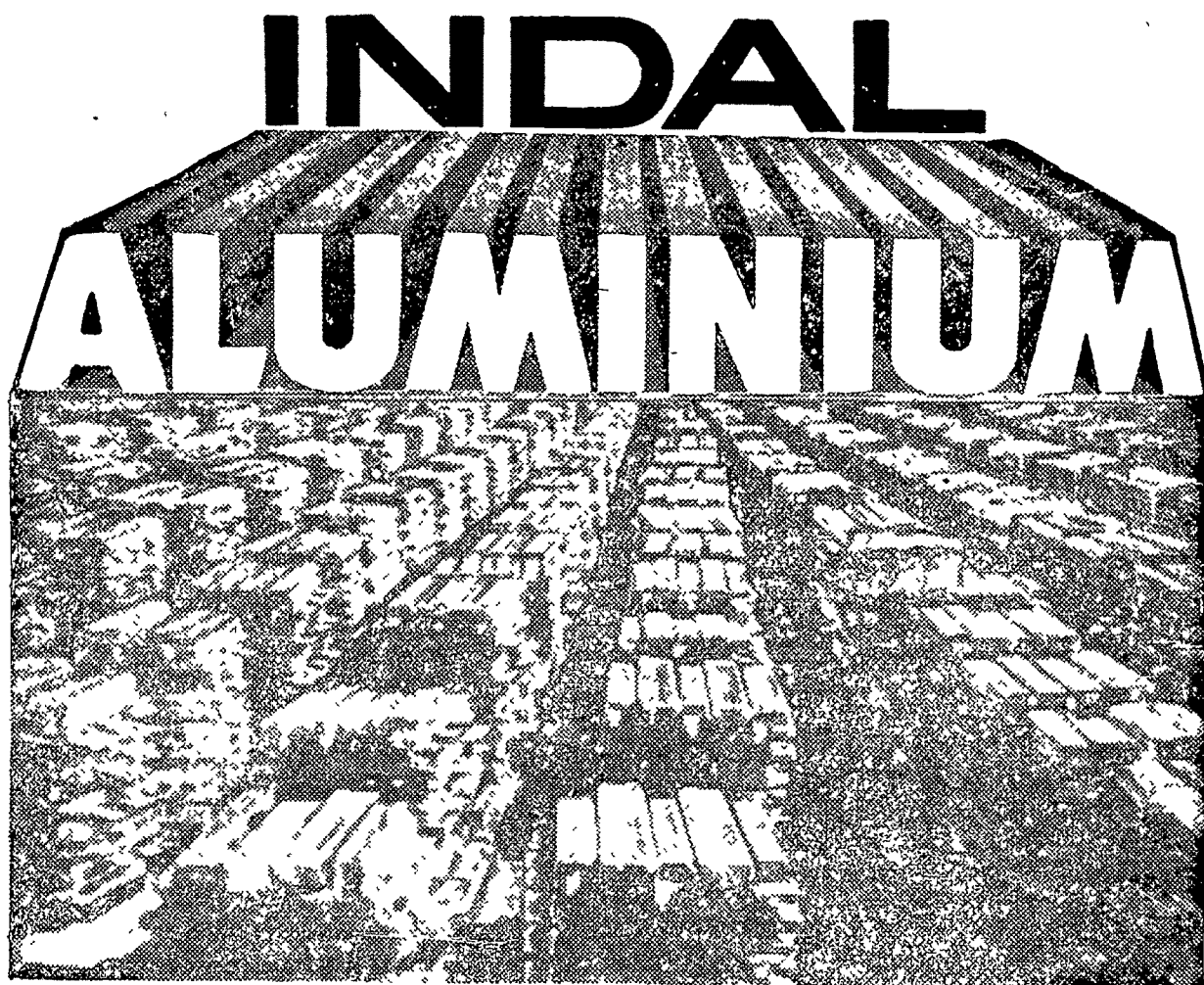
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101 NEXT MONTH : THE SIXTH PLAN

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THE RURAL CHALLENGE

a symposium on
the many facets
of a revival

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of
the issues involved

AGRICULTURE

Bina Agarwal of the Institute of
Economic Growth, Delhi

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COVER

Designed by Trilokesh Mukherjee

The problem

The village today is synonymous with open drains lined with shit, clouded over with flies that can't choose between the drains and the mounds of open sweetmeats, ill ventilated homes, naked children, their eyes misty with the dust and the sand, and all this juxtaposed with nylon and bicycles and bell-bottomed trousers, with schools where the rural young are speedily being taught to forget the skills of their fathers. It is a kind of wayward prosperity amidst the dirt — for it's dirt all the way, particularly in the whole of the northern belt where prosperity entered the village with the green revolution.

This mess that we have made for the mass of our people took at least as long as the course of colonialism, with thirty years of freedom added on to it. As cheap industrial goods flooded the urban areas, a steady stream of highly skilled labour, denied work, sought earnestly to be turned into unskilled labour in the towns, wasting a national resource of enormous magnitude. We lost it because of colonialism, and we continue to lose it because of elite ignorance. Whatever the thrust forward in agriculture, and this cannot be minimised, unless and until these technological skills can be absorbed, the village can never hope to stem the unending exodus which will finally overwhelm the towns with angry, rootless millions.

The village has to be made an anchor, it has to generate

activity and be a home instead of a *sarai*. Activity is not to be confused with the odd assortment of gew-gaws that go by the name of handicrafts to sell to tourists, but solid production, trade and security. Answers have to be sought, not in the splendid isolation of Delhi and other capital cities, but in serious consultation with those whose lives are to be affected. We have village iron-smiths, masons, builders, weavers, potters, and an army of other skilled workers, who have to be activated and that, too, commercially. Drainage, drinking water, village planning not town planning, homesteads which can be made of mud but reinforced with modern technology, a square for regular entertainment including the cinema, but all of this with some real activity at its core, its centre.

Naturally, no anchorage can be created without a healthy agriculture. This means not only tenures, holdings, facilities, pricing systems, marketing, but a whole technological structure to be evolved in close consultation with the working population on the farm. Too much of rural planning is an urban exercise by urbanised minds. It is a limitation we have to work within, but the voice of the farmer is beginning to be heard — and today he is developing a political presence of no ordinary dimension.

This issue of SEMINAR is an attempt to suggest solutions to some of the relevant problems of rural India.

Agriculture

BINA AGARWAL

UNDENIABLY the high yielding variety (HYV) technology gave to the ailing Indian agriculture of the early 1960s a new lease of life. The initial 'grafting' most successfully 'took' in the fertile irrigated fields of the Indo-Gangetic plains, and spectres of 'Famine 1975' were closeted away with the dusty cobwebs of Malthusian logic.

Yet, today, exactly a decade from the first fruitful year of the 'green revolution' questions are once more being asked about the success of this 'grafting'. The questions stem from a series of observations: that the HYV revolution is limited largely to wheat grown in the Punjab-Haryana-Western Uttar Pradesh complex; that for rice, the most important foodcrop in the country, HYV continues to suffer from technical adaptability problems due to its susceptibility to pests and disease; that the existing HYV yields in most places are much below potentials; that in spite of the 'scale neutrality' of the seed-fertiliser package, institutional barriers introduce a bias in favour of the large farmer; and that the adoption of HYV has also been accompanied

by mechanization in the form of tractors and has raised a demand for the introduction of harvester combines — incongruously in a labour-surplus, capital scarce country.

Part of the answer to these observations lies in certain technical constraints — the most important being the slow spread of irrigation. But the more basic questions which these observations raise are: has a decade of experience with HYV technology created a climate within which technical change in agriculture can take place as an automatic on-going process? Is there a mechanism which can ensure that the rural technology adopted in India is one which is in keeping with the factor endowments and ecological conditions of the country and of specific regions?

It appears, however, that in fact many of the ills mentioned stem from a lack of an adaptive response from economic, social and political institutions needed to exploit the potential inherent in the new technologies. The HYV experience perhaps more than any other, in the

rural setting, is pertinent for bringing out this lacuna, since its success requires an integrated response from a whole set of inputs and services — irrigation-seed-fertilizer-credit-research-extension, each of which can create a bottleneck to growth. It is also pertinent for bringing out the biases in the distribution of these inputs and services among different farm size groups.

Irrigation

It is by no means a new realization that higher and more stable agricultural production depends crucially on the availability of irrigation. What the HYV technology has done is to reiterate this concern. As the 1976-77 Government of India Economic Survey observed: '...if foodgrain output is to increase, and the amplitude of fluctuations is to diminish, the higher priority should be given to increasing the area under irrigation. Without an adequate water supply it would be difficult to derive much benefit from high yielding varieties of seeds, increased use of fertilisers and pesticides and improved cultural practices'¹.

Yet this concern with the spread of irrigation ignores the question of water management; nor does it distinguish between the quality of irrigation provided by different

water delivery systems, and shows an overall lack of emphasis on the importance of controlled water supply to the success of scientific farming. The bulk of area irrigated in India comes from surface irrigation schemes — canals, tanks etc., and the overwhelming focus of public policy and investment also continues to be major and medium irrigation works.

Yet, interestingly enough, it is ground water sources in the form of wells (tubewells and dugwells) which have been responsible for the bulk of the additions to net irrigated area since the 1960s. Of the 5.9 million hectares (Mh) increase in net irrigated area between 1965-66 and 1973-74, 4.6 Mh came from wells of which tubewells contributed 4.3 Mh. (refer to Table 1).

The primary advantage of tubewells as compared to canals and tanks lies in the former's ability to control the quantum and timing of irrigation, as well as providing an assured water supply throughout the year. That these aspects can make a crucial difference to the farm's crop yield and cropping intensity as well as promote the adoption and spread of high yielding varieties, is amply supported by studies relating both to India² and to other coun-

tries, for instance, Pakistan³ and Japan⁴.

While presently there appear to be no obvious technological options to tubewells for efficient water management, yet the growth of groundwater irrigation has been left by the government largely to private enterprise. Loans and subsidies provided by the State Departments of Agriculture, financed some portion of the farmer's investment in drilling wells and purchasing pumpsets upto the mid-sixties, but subsequently the subsidies for private tubewell construction was eliminated. Now, virtually, the only source of subsidies for private tubewell construction is the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) set up in 1969. Provision of loans too is now largely dependent on cooperatives and commercial banking institutions, as the giving of loans by the State Departments of Agriculture has been grossly reduced. In the past, private funding was the main source of minor irrigation development, but groundwater development in the future is likely to require more direct government intervention.

So far, the bulk of private investment has been concentrated in

Harrington, Roy E., B.L. Bondurant and G.W. Giles (1972). *Agricultural Mechanization in India*, The Ford Foundation, New Delhi, October.

Rudra, Ashok (1970) "In Search of the Capitalist Farmer", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Agriculture, June 27.

3 See for instance:

Kaneda, H (1969): "Economic Implications of the 'Green Revolution' and the Strategy of Agricultural Development in West Pakistan", *Pakistan Development Review*, Vol 9, No. 2, Summer.

Kaneda, H (1973): "Mechanization, Industrialization and Technological Change in Rural Pakistan", in *Technological Change in Asian Agriculture*, ed by R T Shand, Australian National University Press, Canberra.

McInerney John P, and Graham F Donaldson (1975): "The Consequences of Farm Tractors in Pakistan", IBRD Bank Staff Working Paper No 210, February

Mohammad, Ghulam (1970) "Private Tubewell Development and Cropping Patterns in West Pakistan", in *Empirical Studies on Pakistan Agriculture*, ed. by S M Hussain and M.I. Khan, The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics.

4. See for instance.

Ishikawa, Shigeru (1967). *Economic Development in Asian Perspective*, Kinokuniya, Tokyo.

Table 1
Area Irrigated by Sources

Source	Area Irrigated (Million hectares)		
	1965-66	1973-74	Increase over the period
Canals	11.0	13.0	2.0
Tanks	4.4	3.9	-0.5
Tubewells	1.3	5.6	4.3
Other Wells	7.4	7.7	0.3
Other Sources	2.5	2.3	-0.2
All Sources	26.5	32.6	5.9

Sources For 1965-66: Indian Agricultural Statistics, Vol I, 1965-66, Directorate of Economics & Statistics; Government of India.

For 1973-74: Area Irrigated Sourcewise and Cropwise, mimeo issued in November 1977, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of India

Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh — by a recent estimate⁵, 78% of private tubewells are currently situated in these three States. These have been regions with easy-to-tap groundwater resources and with conditions also favourable for the adoption of the seed-fertilizer package. Public infrastructure in the form of credit institutions and rural electrification were well developed in these areas, and farm holdings, particularly in the Punjab, were predominantly owner-cultivated and on an average large enough to make tubewells viable. The farmers were also in a position to make investments from personal finance sources, supplemented no doubt (at least for the farmers in the Punjab) by remittance from abroad. These parts of India are now rapidly approaching the saturation stage by estimated groundwater potential, and what is in fact required here are more effective measures for recharging the water table to prevent excessive depletion.

The major scope for tapping groundwater in the future lies in the eastern parts of India, namely, in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Orissa. These regions, however, relative to the north and north western parts of the country suffer from a number of disadvantages which are likely to hinder faster private development of tubewells. Firstly, in these States the spread of cooperatives and commercial credit institutions is much more limited. Rural electrification too is much less developed. Secondly, rice cultivation dominates the cropping pattern of the eastern region, and the susceptibility of HYV rice to pests which has limited its adoption, could well discourage investment in complementary inputs such as tubewells. Thirdly, the area has heavier rainfall so that the need for irrigation is less obvious and the incremental benefits fewer. Fourthly, the landholdings here are on average much smaller than those in north-western States and this would raise questions both of the

viability of tubewell investment, and of the ability to finance such investment in the absence of satisfactory institutional credit arrangements for many farmers in the region.

All this points to the need for a greater involvement on the part of the government to support groundwater development, both by encouraging private tubewell investment through easing institutional constraints and developing rural electrification, and by undertaking more public tubewell investment. The lack of successful management of public tubewells to date by itself cannot serve as an argument for neglect in this direction. This is one of the few means of bringing a controlled water supply to the small cultivator, and also a means for a more planned tubewell development which would be in keeping with the long-term economical use of groundwater resources. The absence of a clearcut policy on groundwater development could well act as a serious constraint to HYV-based technical change in the future, particularly since satisfactory rainfed HYV varieties are yet to be developed.

Even in terms of surface irrigation there is much to be desired from the existing works. Canal conveyance systems designed in the British period served essentially as supplements to rainfall, and where the emphasis was on covering an extensive area rather than serving the needs of intensive agriculture. The age-old systems lack control structures to deliver water selectively when required over short periods and in larger and controlled quantities. There is also a good deal of water loss through seepage. In addition, faulty planning of irrigation schemes which are executed without due consideration for drainage cause water logging problems — it has been estimated that 6 Mh of land in India is waterlogged⁶. Some forms of water control could be in-built at the canal construction stage through effective designing,

and the lining of canals could serve to reduce seepage losses.

But of as great importance is Command Area Development which requires construction of adequate field drainage facilities, proper land preparation (land shaping, levelling etc) and the preparing and maintaining of suitable field channels. Often while the basic infrastructure of surface irrigation exists, these supplementary investments are not made. The importance of these improvements has been constantly emphasized (including in the fifth plan document) specially in view of covering the gap between utilization and potential created by major irrigation schemes.

However, it appears that a good deal of the failure to effectively utilize existing surface irrigation works lies in a neglect of what Robert Chambers calls 'the human side of the organization and operation of irrigation systems — the management of those who manage the water, procedures for irrigation control, the processes of allocation of water to groups or individuals, the distribution of water within groups.'⁷ For instance, under canal irrigation, without proper desilting of conveyance channels at the top ends, water flow to the tail ends is effected. Farmers at the top ends are however not always willing to maintain channels from which they get no direct benefit. Ultimately water-sharing arrangements or undertaking of field-works, maintenance of channels etc., would require common agreement among farmers within the command area. Rural hierarchies and tensions which beset the working of local institutions make such arrangements difficult.

In addition, a lack of proper water distribution arrangements causes inefficient use of water. The farmers at the upper reaches of the canals, for example, have been known to adopt cropping patterns and irrigation techniques which are wasteful to water. In Andhra

⁵ Interim Report of the Working Group on Minor Irrigation (1977), Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India.

⁶ Michael, A M (1976, p 47), "Water Management for Higher Production" in *New Agricultural Technology and Communication Strategy*, ed by S Dasgupta and M G Bhagat, Institute of Bank Management, Bombay.

⁷ Chambers, Robert (1977, p 304): "Men and Water: the Organization and Operation of Irrigation", in *Green Revolution* ed by B H Farmer, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London and Basingstoke

Pradesh, for instance, Robert Wade⁸ notes that even when, for planned distribution of water over the command area, restrictions are imposed in terms of the location and area entitled to irrigation, and the crops to be grown and irrigated, these restrictions are often not enforced. As a result, Wade notes: 'most farmers grew paddy regardless of whether their land was "localized" (that is zoned) for paddy or indeed for any irrigated crop at all,' and farmers at the lower reaches of the canal suffered. Not infrequently, powerful farmer lobbies supported by local politicians and administrators tend to control the canal water distribution system

Chamber's argument in fact would apply also to the distribution of tubewell irrigation. As has been pointed out in the context of Pakistani agriculture as well⁹, it is not the seed-fertilizer package itself which prevents the new technology from being neutral to scale — in fact a large number of small farmers at least in the wheat belt have adopted HYV and use chemical fertilizers both in India and Pakistan — rather it is the inavailability of supplementary water to many small farmers which becomes an important disqualifying factor in reaping the full benefits of the new varieties

Water-sharing arrangements, that is, buying of tubewell water by small farmers from their richer neighbours provides one means by which the benefits of tubewells can percolate down. But these arrangements are not always satisfactory. Water rates are often too high and water is usually available at times determined by the tubewell owner, not the buyer. Hence, one of the primary advantages of tubewell irrigation, namely, the ability of the farmer to control the timing of irrigation, does not accrue to one

buying the water; and uncertainty regarding availability is likely to prevent him from making innovative cropping decisions which would normally be expected to follow in the wake of tubewell development.

In this context an encouraging feature of recent private tubewell development is the construction of low-cost bamboo tubewells (costing about Rs 5,200) in the eastern States. It is estimated that 33,000 bamboo tubewells have been sunk manually in the sandy and light soil of North Bihar and which are believed to have brought 40,000 hectares under irrigation¹⁰

Seeds

The absence of an in-built mechanism by which technical change can proceed smoothly is also brought out when we consider the inadequately served requirements of HYV seeds themselves. There are three important aspects in this: first, the need for intensive research to initially adapt the seed to the particular ecological conditions of a region; second, the need for research to take account of new adaptability problems that come up; and, third, the need to maintain the varietal purity of hybrid seeds by proper seed certification arrangements and by the replacement of seeds used in the fields every few years. The importance of adaptation is clearly seen in the problems faced

10 Roy, K (1976, p 51) "Tubewells and Pumpsets in Irrigation System", in, *New Agricultural Technology and Communication Strategy op cit*

by HYV rice, where the most commonly used variety, IR 8, continues to suffer from pest and plant diseases — a fact which has slowed adoption and lowered yield potentials.

The main success of the new varieties has been in wheat. In 1976-77, 70.4% of wheat area was under HYV, relative to only 35.6% of rice area and about 15-20% of areas under jowar, bajra and maize (refer to Table 2)

The success of HYV wheat itself has been largely in Punjab-Haryana-Western UP which account for the bulk of area under HYV wheat. In these areas the agro-climatic conditions under which it was grown were broadly similar, and the same strains were found to be suitable for the whole area. The principal rice-growing States (such as West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu) on the other hand, vary widely in their soil and climatic conditions, and different types of strains would need to be developed to make the new rice varieties adaptive to the areas in which they are grown. This is inevitably a more difficult task—a factor which would tend to slow down the future progress of HYV.

New problems of adaptation also tend to come up. For instance, in recent years Kalyan Sona — the main high yielding variety of wheat seed adopted, which was initially rust resistant has now become susceptible to rust. As a result, areas growing Kalyan Sona have suffered considerable losses since the early seventies, specially on farms where the crop was grown late.

Table 2
Area under HYV

Crop	1966-67		1976-77	
	HYV area@ (Million hec)	% HYV area* to total crop area	HYV area@ (Million hec)	% HYV area* to total crop area
Wheat	0.54	4.2	14.69	70.4
Paddy	0.88	2.5	13.73	35.6
Bajra	0.06	0.5	2.21	20.6
Maize	0.21	4.1	1.20	19.8
Jowar	0.19	1.0	2.65	16.8
All five crops	1.88	2.1	34.48	37.5

Source @Economic Survey of 1974-75 and 1977-78, Government of India

*Computed.

8. Wade, Robert (1978, p A-9) "Water Supply as an Instrument of Agricultural Policy: A Case Study", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Agriculture, March 25

9 See, for instance Gotsch, Carl (1977) "The Green Revolution and Future Developments of Pakistan's Agriculture", in *Rural Development in Bangladesh and Pakistan*, ed by Robert D Stevens, Hamza Alavi and Peter J Bertocci, The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu

Efforts have been made to replace Kalyan Sona but a lack of an adequate seed production infrastructure coupled with insufficient attention paid by the breeders to rust resistance, has left the farmers vulnerable and without any means of quickly correcting the situation. While earlier planting has helped to reduce the damage, the overall effect is likely to reduce the acceptability of the new varieties and to hamper its adoption in new areas.

Finally, the mere planting of new improved varieties has no meaning unless the seed itself is of high quality. Nor is it merely adequate to ensure that the seed used in new areas is of certified quality; it is also necessary to maintain the varietal purity of seeds in areas where they are presently in use. HYV rice and wheat for instance require seed replacement by pure, high quality seed at least every four or five years. To ensure adequate and timely seed availability, however, requires a more dynamic programme for strengthening the basic support of information, certification and supply of breeder and foundation seed by the seed industry than has been undertaken to date. Inadequate availability of technical services, guidance and supervision, and of arrangements for proper certification of seeds means that much of the seed being used could be of poor output potential. In fact it is not unlikely that at least a part of the reason for the increase in agricultural output being much less than would have been expected from the additions to area under HYV, is the deterioration in seed quality in earlier-planted areas and the use of poor quality seed in the more recently-planted ones.

The seed industry incorporates a complex series of functions—production of breeder and foundation seed, seed certification, processing and distribution. To increase the supply of certified seed also requires the increase of breeder and foundation seed. At present, seed production is dispersed between the National Seeds Corporation, some private groups and corporations, and the State Agricultural Departments. The National Seed Corporation—the primary seed producing

agency in the country, is strained in terms of manpower and facilities. The same agency also acts as the principal certification agency, and the problems of staff shortage prevent adequate enforcement of certification standards as well.

Fertilizers

Similarly, the existing arrangements for fertilizer distribution and availability do not reflect the importance of this input in increasing agricultural productivity under intensive cultivation. By the National Commission on Agriculture 1976 estimates, of the expected addition to foodgrain production between 1971 and 1985, over 70% is assumed to come from fertilizers.¹¹ This would mean that a shortfall in fertilizer consumption could make a crucial difference to output produced.

The slow growth of fertilizer consumption has in fact been a cause for concern in recent years. Demand has no doubt been influenced by factors such as fertilizer shortages, monsoon failures and substantial increases in fertilizer prices. But cumbersome administrative procedures for issuance of fertilizers have also played their role in reducing demand. For instance, local officials are required to ascertain the actual acreage that farmers have under different crops, before issuing permits for fertilizer purchase. Such measures which were introduced at a time when fertilizer supplies fell short of demand at official prices, in order to make sure that only legitimate users got fertilizers, now have an unnecessary dampening effect on demand. Even the existing demand, is however, only partly satisfied with domestic production—the rest is covered by imports. Over 1973-74 to 1975-76, the total availability of Nitrogen-Phosphatic-Potassium (NPK) fertilizers averaged 3.0 million tonnes of which imports contributed as much as 48%.

Apart from shortfalls in fertilizer consumption, another problem for concern is the finding that the

¹¹ National Commission on Agriculture (1976, p 79), Part III, *Demand and Supply*. Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India.

response rates of fertilizers on the farmers' fields are much lower than expected from field trials. The use of less than recommended quantities of fertilizer or use of NPK in improper proportions (excessive use of nitrogen) are other problems with regard to fertilizer use. It has been observed, for instance, that farmers often have their own norms of fertilizer use (usually much below recommended levels and in some cases higher).¹²

Suitable fertilizer planning would require not merely ensuring availability, and improvement in the fertilizer distribution network and credit facilities, but also encouragement of fertilizer use in areas of specially low consumption. Recent observations that fertilizer use tends to diminishing returns would further obviate the need to shift demand and consumption to areas, and for crops, where responses are likely to be more. It would also be worth considering the policy implications of recent research findings such as those of Kirith Parikh, who on the basis of an analysis of simple fertilizer trials conducted by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, observes that 'fertilizer need not necessarily be concentrated on irrigated land or on HYVs. Fertilizer allocation ought to be based on an analysis of local conditions and response of the available varieties'.¹³

Small Farmers

Ultimately, if technical change in agriculture is to be widespread it must actively involve the small farmers. By the 1970-71 agricultural census, 51% of the operational holdings in India belonged to the less than 1 hectare size group and 70% to the less than 2 hectare size group (refer to Table 3.)

The latest evidence gathered by

¹² PEO/AMU (1976, pp 112-113 and 177-180): *The Higher Yielding Varieties Programme in India (1970-75), Part II*, Project Evaluation Organization, Planning Commission and the Australian National University.

¹³ Parikh Kirith (1978, p A-5) "HYV and Fertilizers Synergy or Substitution: Implications for Policy and Prospects for Agricultural Development", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Agriculture, March 25.

the PED/AMU study¹⁴ presents a varied picture with regard to the adoption of HYV on farms of different size groups.

In the wheat-growing areas the percentage of cultivators adopting HYV wheat as in 1974-75 was found to be almost as high among the small farms as the large, and in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh adoption was close to 100%. However, with the exception of Punjab where adoption was almost equally rapid among all groups, the *pace* of adoption was in general much slower among the small farmers. The percentage of irrigated wheat area planted with HYV was also close to 100% in all farm size groups in almost all the study areas, and there were no marked differences between large and small farmers in the pace of coverage

In the rice areas, however, with the exception of the agriculturally advanced areas such as the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and the Thanjavur district of Tamilnadu, in the other study areas there were considerable differences between small and large farms both in the percentage of farms adopting HYV rice as in 1974-75, as well as in the pace of adoption since 1967-68. In terms of the percentage of total rice sown with HYV too, the levels were much below 100% in virtually all the study areas.

The high level of adoption of HYV wheat among the small wheat

farmers is an encouraging feature. However, this by itself does not give scope for great optimism. A number of factors have and are likely to continue to work against the small farmer, particularly in the newly adopting areas. The wheat areas, specially the North Western States as already noted, compared to the rice States, had several factors aiding adoption — an overall larger size of holding than the all-India average (by the 1970-71 agricultural census 62.1% of rice area falls in holdings of less than 4 hectares in size, compared to 48.8% of wheat area), better development of groundwater resources, and good institutional and infrastructure arrangements. Future growth of area under HYV is however likely to depend principally on HYV rice.

Technical difficulties with rice varieties make this a risky crop—a factor which disproportionately affects the small farmer. Added to this, institutional and irrigation arrangements are much poorer in most of the major rice-growing States which would work to the greater disadvantage of the small farmers. Of considerable importance too is the observed bias against small farmers in terms of access to knowledge of new cultural practices—a factor which assumes special importance in view of the more vulnerable nature of the rice technology.

In general, a number of factors tend to favour the large farmers in the HYV programme. Firstly, while the new technology is 'scale-neutral'

it is by no means 'resource-neutral'. Due to their greater access to funds (both personal and institutional) the large farmers are in a better position not merely to purchase new seeds and fertilizers, but also to invest in the same 'lumpy' part of the 'package', namely, tubewells. Unequal access to tubewell water can in fact, as noted earlier, serve to be an important disequalizing factor among adopting farmers.

Secondly, access to institutional credit is, as is by now well known, greatly biased against the small farmer. Cooperatives have been found to serve least the requirements of those farmers most in need of such funds, though it is known that the availability of cooperative credit can in fact prove to be a significant factor determining the farmer's ability to adopt the new varieties. Some of the problems became obvious during the implementation of the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme (IADP) launched in India in the early sixties. The farmers participating in the programme were to receive credit on the basis of their production capacity and not on their credit worthiness. The Reserve Bank agreed to issue crop loans to facilitate this. However, the cooperatives in many areas did not affect any radical change in their policies or procedures for making loans. It was observed that this was often due to inefficiency or unwillingness on their part rather than a lack of funds, and a major part of the special funds that the Reserve Bank had made available to the cooperatives remained unutilized, even in the face of a large unsatisfied demand.

The working of cooperatives was also bogged down by red tape and discrimination. For example, in some districts it was observed that a loan application made by the cultivator had at times to move through 15-18 persons for processing before money was extended. This sometimes took between 2 to 18 months. However, if the cultivator was of good standing or had influence, this same procedure could be cut to an hour!

One reason often put forward for the poor working of cooperatives is

Table 3
Size distribution of Operational Holdings
(1970-71)

Size group (hectares)	Number of holdings (million)	Percent of holdings	Area (million hectares)	Percent of area
Less than 1	35.68	50.6	14.55	9.0
1 — 2	13.43	19.0	19.28	11.9
2 — 4	10.68	15.2	30.00	18.5
4 — 10	7.93	11.3	48.23	29.7
10 +	2.77	3.9	50.06	30.9
All	70.49	100.0	162.12	100.0

Source Agricultural Census 1970-71, p. 26, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Department of Agriculture, Government of India.

that of default by small farmers. However, interestingly enough, it was noted in a sample study of small and large cooperative societies, that in the large societies the defaults (overdue as a percentage of loans outstanding) were the same for large and small farmers, while in the small societies it was the big farmers who were the greater defaulters. Due to their greater power and influence at the local level, the large farmers were able to corner a substantial proportion of the credit from the small societies and were also able to get away with large overdues.¹⁵

The All India Rural Credit Committee Report of 1969 pointed out the unsatisfactory performance of cooperatives, particularly in providing credit to small farmers and tenants. It was felt that cooperatives would not be able to adequately serve rural credit needs, and a multi-agency approach was suggested through increased involvement of land development banks, commercial banks, the Agricultural Refinance Corporation and the Rural Electrification Corporation. The SFDA was also started to serve the needs of the small farmers. But in its actual working the benefits of SFDA have not been found to reach the target groups, the bulk of the benefits having gone to the better-off farmers, who have managed to pass as 'small farmers'.

The realisation that in practice such programmes do not serve the need for which they were started clearly exists. For instance, the draft fifth plan in pointing out the defects in the fourth plan noted that 'in programmes where it was expected to benefit particularly the poorer sections of the rural population, often due to lack of spelling out of the necessary checks and balances the actual benefit went to classes who were not nominated for such benefits'.¹⁶ In tangible terms, however, little has improved since,

and administrative and operational bottlenecks continue to thwart such well meant attempts at rural uplift.

Thirdly, a factor which assumes great importance in the context of the HYV technology is the bias against small farmers in their access to information of the latest agricultural practices. It has been noted in studies relating to the diffusion of innovations that the two major sources of information on new practices are extension agents and mass media (principally radio and printed matter). In terms of both these sources the large farmer is in a more favourable position. The incidence of literacy as well as personal ownership of radios tends to be much higher among the large farmers, related as these factors are to economic position. The large farmers also have much closer contact than small farmers with the extension workers. Ultimately the farmer's socio-economic status determines both the speed and level of adoption of new practices.¹⁷

This inbuilt bias against the small farmer in the diffusion and extension process becomes particularly important in the post-adoption stage for a number of reasons. Firstly, the realization of the full potential of the new varieties (apart from the problem of input availability) depends a good deal on the knowledge and application of the correct cultural practices — the right dosage and mix of fertilizers, the timing of sowing and fertilizer application, efficient water management, correct spacing of seeds etc., — in short, incorporating a much more complex series of operations than the farmer is used to from his experience of traditional varieties. The need to maintain varietal purity of seed by constant renewal is another aspect of the re-learning process. An obvious example is the recent tendency to rust where, in the absence of rust resis-

tent varieties, the knowledge that early sowing can save the crop becomes very important.

All this indicates that over time, unless measures are taken to remove the institutional biases, the dis-equalising factors at work are likely to become increasingly pernicious. In this context it is worth noting that certain recent studies have pointed to the increase in inequality in the distribution of farm business income (the surplus of gross value of output over actual costs) over and above the unequal distribution of land.¹⁸ While these studies relate essentially to the very early years of the green revolution, they are certainly indicative of likely trends since. A comment made by Carl Gotsch in the context of Pakistani agriculture is of relevance here: 'It does not take long for productivity differences to be capitalized into perceived differences in land purchase or rental values—differences that can form the basis for land agglomeration even before the introduction of equipment possessing significant economies of scale'.¹⁹

Tractorization

However, the meaningful use of research findings, be they in the form of warnings or pointers to new innovative practices and schemes, and whether they stem from agricultural scientists and engineers or from social scientists, requires from the policy makers a responsiveness and a desire to incorporate these in the planning process. What does tend to happen in practice is that the demands of small pressure groups serve to dictate policy issues of wider impact.

The tractorization debate is an interesting case in point. The debate centered round the possibility that tractors even if they have a labour displacing effect would at the same time help to augment output by

¹⁷ See for instance:

Kivlin, Joseph E., Fredrick C. Fliegel, Pradipto Roy and Lalit K. Sen (1971). *Innovation in Rural India*, Bowling Green State University Press, Bowling Green, Ohio.

Institute of Applied Manpower Research (1976 Ch 2) *Manpower Development in Rural India*, Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, India.

¹⁸ See for instance.

Saini, G. R. (1976) "Green Revolution and the Distribution of Farm Incomes", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Agriculture, March 27.

Bardhan, Pranab K. (1974) "Inequality of Farm Income—A Study of Four Districts", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, February.

¹⁹ Gotsch, Carl (1977, p. 356), *op cit*.

¹⁵ Rao, C. H. H. (1970) "Farm Size and Credit Policy", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Review of Agriculture, December 26.

¹⁶ *Draft Fifth Five Year Plan* (1974-79, p. 103), Vol. I, Planning Commission, Government of India.

adding to crop yields and cropping intensity. What followed was a series of studies which compared farms that owned tractors with those that did not. Observing that the crop yields and/or cropping intensity on tractor farms were higher than on non-tractor farms a happy conclusion was reached that tractors were beneficial for output.²⁰ No attempt was made to examine how far any observed higher output on tractor farms was in fact due to a higher use of other inputs such as fertilizers, HYV, or tubewell irrigation. Studies where in fact specific account was taken of some of these other inputs, failed to observe any substantial output benefits from tractorization *per se*²¹—at least not in the Punjab which accounts for the bulk of the investment in tractors to date, and which continues to make the loudest demand for further mechanization.

The finding of a neutral crop yield effect of tractor use in the Punjab should not in fact appear to be surprising when we consider that the two major potential advantages of using tractors instead of bullocks, namely deeper ploughing and more timely tillage, would have been provided by alternative means.

20 See for instance

Chopra, Kusum (1972) *Tractorization and Its Impact on the Agrarian Economy of Punjab*, USAID, American Embassy, New Delhi, February

Johl, S S (1970) "Mechanization, Labour-use and Productivity in Indian Agriculture", Economics and Sociology Occasional Paper No. 23, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

NCAER (1973) *Impact of Mechanization Agriculture on Employment*, National Council for Applied Economic Research, New Delhi

Singh, Roshan and B B Singh (1972): "Farm Mechanization in Western UP", in *Problems of Farm Mechanization*, Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Bombay, Seminar Series IX, February.

21. See for instance:

Agarwal, Bina, (1977), *op cit*

Rudra, Ashok (1970), *op cit*.

Singh, Gajendra and William Chancellor (1973). "Relations between Farm Mechanization and Crop Yield for a Farming District in India", Paper No 73-511, University of Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky, June 17-20

Vashishtha, Prem (1975) *Issues in Technological Adaptations and Agricultural Development—An Analysis of Production Functions on Punjab Farms*, Ph D dissertation, University of Delhi, April

For instance, the advantage of deep tillage which a tractor provides by turning the subsoil to make the more fertile parts accessible, and by uprooting weeds and exposing harmful insects to the sun, becomes less significant when farmers are using chemical fertilizers and pesticides/weedicides or performing interculture, as they are doing in the Punjab

Similarly, the additional 'time-lines' advantage of the tractor may be slight when threshing has already been mechanized. To elaborate: by saving time in ploughing, the tractor can enable timely sowing, and the date of sowing usually makes a crucial difference to crop yield. However, if the first crop, say wheat, is mechanically threshed (as wheat is, in virtually all of Punjab), the bullocks could be released for early tillage for the second crop, and sowing could still be done on time on bullock farms. In such situations, a tractor may provide no additional advantage.

A reason often put forward to justify tractorization from the private point of view in the areas where tractorization has been popular, is the inavailability of labour at required times and/or the cost of labour. Yet it is interesting to note that in the Punjab where investment in tractors has been the most in India, their actual use has been limited primarily to ploughing, an operation which both under the bullock and tractor techniques is done either by family or permanent labour—that is by labour which is a fixed cost to the farm. This is also the likely reason that while tractorization has been found to reduce requirements of *labour time* it has produced no significant effect on the number of *labourers* employed on the farm.²² Nor does the argument of the higher cost of bullock upkeep hold substance in view of the continued maintenance of bullocks on tractor-owning farms, partly to guard against the risk of tractor breakdown and partly due to the partial level of tractorization on most tractor farms. Quite apart from this, the observed under-utilization of tractors on the farms, casts

additional doubts on the advisability of investing in all-purpose tractors (which constitute highly capital intensive equipment) in a capital-scarce economy

The experience of other countries indicates that the demand for tractorization stemmed either from a situation of labour shortage (as in USA & Japan) or because political considerations dictated collectivization of agriculture, which on the one hand involved large scale farming and on the other caused widespread slaughter of draught animals and an acute shortage of draught animal power (as in Russia and China).

Mechanization as a means of technical change in the United States was in keeping with the resource endowments of the country where labour was a scarce resource. In Japan, too, mechanization only became important in the post World War II period when a large-scale exodus of workers to the cities created conditions of labour shortage. Even then Japanese mechanization was based on small power tillers used for ploughing. Also, the popularity of power-tillers lay in their time-saving effect and had nothing to do with increasing yields. At times, in fact, the new power tillers were found to be less efficient in soil preparation than the old Japanese ploughs. More essential for raising yields were timely irrigation, increased use of fertilizers and new varieties of seeds.²³ Another noteworthy feature of Japanese mechanization was that it was highly selective and confined to the requirements of specific operations. The initial attempt to introduce western technology mainly suitable for large-scale farming was found to be a failure, and this approach was abandoned in favour of a 'combination of indigenous know how and very selective borrowing from the West'.²⁴

23 Sawada, Shujiro (1969, p 152); "Technological Change in Japanese Agriculture A Long Term Analysis", in *Agriculture and Economic Growth—Japan's Experience*, *op cit*

24 Ogura, Takakazu (1963, p 625). "Agriculture in Japan: The Historical Pattern of Development", in *Agricultural Development in Modern Japan*, ed. by Takakazu Ogura, Japan FAO Association

22. Agarwal, Bina (1977), *op cit*

Research and Extension

Adaptive research was in fact one of the most significant features of technological adoption in Japan; an important aspect of this was the deliberate attempt on the part of the Meiji government to involve the farmers in the innovative process. For instance, in 1885, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in Japan established an Itinerant Instructor System (IIS). Under this scheme, instructors travelled throughout the country holding agricultural extension meetings. These instructors consisted not merely of graduates of agricultural universities but also of veteran farmers, in order to combine the best practical farming experience with the new scientific knowledge of the inexperienced college graduate'.²⁵

The earlier emphasis had been on the direct transplanting of western technology. The IIS was designed to diffuse the best seed varieties already being used by Japanese farmers and the most productive cultural practices used in the production of Japan's traditional staple crops. 'Intimate knowledge of the best of traditional farming methods was thus the starting point for agricultural research and extension activities. Procedures were devised to ensure adaptation of improved varieties to varying local conditions. Considerable attention was also given to the preparation of instructions for the rational use of fertilizers on different crops and under various soil and climatic conditions'.²⁶ The IIS was subsequently absorbed into the programme of the National Agricultural Experiment Station.

The close involvement of the farmers in the innovation process had other advantages. For instance, rice production practices such as

the use of salt water in seed selection, improved preparation and management of nursery beds and checkrow planting were discovered by farmers. These were then propagated by the itinerant instructors, and sometimes even enforced through the sabres of the police.²⁷ Farmers' innovations were often tested and refined in Experiment Research Stations.

In India, no such system exists by which the needs or the experience of the farmers would flow back to the research institutions or to the administrators. Problems emerging at the local level therefore do not get solved, and the extension recommendations made to the farmer by the extension workers often tend to lack credibility and acceptability. The existing extension system for a one-way downward flow of information itself leaves much to be desired administratively.

The principal agent of extension in the village is meant to be the Village Level Worker (VLW). Though administratively he is the lowest in the hierarchy, in practice he is perhaps the most important figure in the system, having closest contact with the field and being the key person responsible for extension of agricultural information on which the success of many agricultural programmes crucially depend. In reality however he has not served this purpose adequately. Part of the weakness lies in the role of the VLW as a 'generalist'. He often has to handle work not related to agriculture, such as being directed to help in the government's family planning programmes.

During the implementation of the IADP, the role of the VLW was intensively discussed, and the need for him to concentrate fully on activities relating to food production was constantly stressed. It was felt that if he were to continue to serve the purpose of overall rural development rather than concentrate on agriculture, it would inevitably dilute the effectiveness of his agricultural function. This is in effect what did happen. As the

fourth IADP Evaluation Report pointed out: 'There is definite directive that the VLW should devote 100 per cent of his time to agriculture. In spite of this the VLW continues to be very much of a multi-purpose worker.. Representations have been made to the Committee by farmers and officers that even during the busy season for agriculture, when urgent supplies or services or information for farm operations had to be arranged, VLWs were suddenly diverted for family planning, procurement, small savings and such other campaigns. Requests for postponing such non-agricultural work until after the busy agricultural season were not heeded. Under such arrangements and assignment of duties, the VLW is precluded from providing educational leadership to agricultural development upto his potential capacity'.²⁸

Another weakness has been the inadequate training that the VLW receives. He is responsible for disseminating the latest information on farming practices to the cultivator, convincing the cultivator of the advantages of adoption through field demonstrations and personal persuasion and, during the IADP programmes, even for helping the cultivator to draw up his farm plan which would serve as a framework for adoption. Training has however been woefully inadequate. As the draft fifth five year plan also emphasized: 'A weakness in the organisation has been the obsolescence of the knowledge of the field workers and the need to bring them up-to-date in their sciences so as to be able to get the message of the science across to the farmers'.²⁹

Without proper knowledge and training, not merely is the VLW not in a position to impart new information but he is also not able to generate enough confidence in the farmer so that the latter would

25 Hayami, Yujiro and Vernon W. Ruttan (1971, p 155) *Agricultural Development An International Perspective*, The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore and London.

26 Johnston, Bruce F (1969, p 61) "The Japanese 'model' of Agricultural Development Its Relevance to Developing Nations" in *Agriculture and Economic Growth — Japan's Experience*, op cit.

27 Hayami, Yujiro and Vernon W. Ruttan (1971 p. 157) op cit.

28 Expert Committee on Assessment and Evaluation (1969, pp. 42-43) "Modernizing Indian Agriculture Fourth Report on the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme (1960-68), Vol I Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Corporation, Government of India

29 Draft Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79, p. 103), Vol I, op cit.

be receptive to any information that the VLW might possess. For instance, in the earlier mentioned PEO/AMU study it was noted that there was 'a widespread lack of confidence and reliance amongst cultivators on extension officers for HYVP guidance'.³⁰

Two broad inadequacies were noted in the study. One was the lack of content in extension information imparted at the village level. This was a good deal due to the fact that soil testing and fertilizer trials were often not carried out at the local level so that the optimum set of practices in tune with *local* needs could not be worked out, and reliance had often to be placed on State-level recommendations. The second was the lack of ability of the extension worker to efficiently impart information due to the earlier mentioned factor of the worker being bogged down with non-agricultural duties.

An additional problem highlighted during the IADP programme was the frequent transfer of extension staff. Over 40%-50% of the IADP staff from the Block Development Officer downward served a tenure of less than two years and often of less than one year in any given area in his circuit (refer to Table 4). This meant a loss to the region of the experience the staff would have acquired on the problems of the

30. PEO/AMU study (1976, p 11), *op cit*

area, and of their familiarity and understanding of the farmer's needs and attitudes. It also meant disruption of any close working relationship they might have developed with the local people and institutions to make extension work more effective. Added to the problem of transfers was that of vacancies. The recruitment procedures were often complicated and there were considerable time lags before many of the vacant, sometimes key, positions were filled. These are problems which continue to beset agricultural programmes even today.

More recently, a new approach to extension is being tried out in Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Madhya Pradesh. Under the scheme a certain percentage of the VLWs are selected to work only on agricultural extension and designated as Village Extension Workers (VEWs). Each VEW is assigned a certain number of farm families comprising both large and small farmers. The VEW visits groups of these families in turn, meeting with each group once every week or fortnight. The scheme includes continuous in-service training on aspects which need to be emphasized and extended to the farmers. These aspects include not merely extension of new varieties but also of better management practices such as the advantages of row-sowing, good land preparation etc. The progress of this scheme would be of interest and could well bring about a new orientation in the

approach to agricultural extension practices.

Administrative Structure

However, the success of this or similar schemes that are being tried out by innovative individuals or groups, depends ultimately on what has been rightly emphasized as the 'political will' of the country's administrators and policy makers. In the past, the implementation process of agricultural programmes was beset with numerous administrative problems.

A crucial weakness has been the absence of strong and effective *linkages* necessary for administratively coordinating the complex inter-related aspect of the agricultural modernization process. This would include linkage between the various ministries dealing with different agricultural concerns at the level of the central government where broad policy planning and resource allocation decisions are made; between the economic, technical and administrative aspects of such concerns, so that coordinated policy decisions would emerge; between central government policy directives and specific implementation schemes drawn up by each individual State; and between different departments having a bearing on agricultural development. A powerful multi-disciplinary body (particularly at the State level) including technical experts on various agriculture-related aspects, which could take an overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation process, could perhaps help to give the concept of Integrated Agricultural Development more concrete shape. As matters stand, while agriculture is everybody's concern it is nobody's baby.

The lack of an effective interaction between the technical expert and the administrator supervising the implementation of agricultural programmes, is also a serious lacuna. As agricultural modernization proceeds and the production process increases in complexity, the role of the technical expert becomes increasingly important, as does the need for the administrator to

Table 4
Length of Service of IADP Agricultural Extension Staff
in the same location (percentages)

Category of Staff	Less than 1 yr.	1-2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	Over 3 yrs.	Total (%)
Block Development Officer (BDO)	27	31	12	30	100
Agricultural Extension Officer (AEO)	27	24	24	25	100
Cooperative Extension Officer (CEO)	23	33	25	19	100
Village Level Worker (VLW)	10	31	45	14	100

Source. Expert Committee on Assessment and Evaluation (1966, p 11) IADP Second Report (1960-65), Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation.

understand and take account of these complexities.

The existing administrative machinery provides no automatic process to ensure that the administrator (particularly at the level of the District Collector) is either himself induced to become more knowledgeable about the requirements of modern agriculture, or learns to give greater weight to those who possess such expertise. The 'generalist' character of the District Collector's knowledge and functions is as much a disadvantage at this level, as that of the VLW at the lower level. In addition, the usually short average tenure of a District Collector in one place puts an effective block to the application of any area-specific knowledge that he might have acquired during his tenure, and which he could have put to effective use

The absence of adequate coordination between the agricultural universities and the extension agencies of the State Departments of Agriculture, introduces an additional 'leakage' in the working of the system. Perhaps the most crucial 'missing link' is the absence of effective channels for a return flow of information from the farmer who is the final implementing 'entity' and the paper implementing authorities.

Inadequate decentralization of decision-making and financial allocation authority can also become a bottleneck. During the IADP programme, for instance, in one District the Project Officer had to obtain sanctions from State Departments even for spending on field demonstrations. Often when sanctions did come the demonstration season would be over. The following comments of the Punjab Administrative Reforms Commission about the functioning of the State Finance Department during this period, appear to the devastatingly apt;

'We are constrained to remark that the Finance Department today is considered as an obstacle rather than assistance in execution of programmes and policies. Much of this is due to the misconception of the Finance

Department of its role. There is clearly the need for reduction of post-budget interference. Unfortunately, the officials of the Finance Department continue to indulge in pettyfoggish objections and queries causing delays and generally frustrating the tempo of progress. The result is inefficiency, frustration, and often national waste'.³¹

The underlying weakness appears to lie essentially in the attitude of the administration to change. The comments made in the Second Evolution Report of the IADP with regard to the approach of the Indian administrative machinery continue to be highly relevant:

'This (administrative) system, based essentially on checks and balances, evolved in a different time and for a different purpose, has proved woefully inadequate for any operation, the aim of which is not to maintain the *status quo*, but to change it. The IADP has thus been a square peg in a round hole. The main objective of IADP is to accelerate the rate of growth by bringing about a basic change in the situation in which it operates. The main purpose of the administrative system that India has inherited is, on the other hand, to ensure security and hence allow only the minimum possible change. The IADP puts a premium on the technician who is the harbinger of change. The Indian administrative system gives primacy to the administrator whose main function is to lay down and administer the rules designed to ensure conformity. The basic idea of the IADP is that it should be a tailor-made programme to suit the needs of a particular area which can be adjusted by the local authorities promptly and effectively, as and when the situation changes. The main concern of the Indian administrative system has been to lay down general patterns of conformity to which the areas must adjust rather than otherwise and leave the least possible discretion

to the authorities' lower in the hierarchical structure.³²

The major conclusion which emerges from the above review of a decade of HYV experience is that technical change in Indian agriculture has yet to become a dynamic and on-going process. The success of the HYV package to date appears to have been a result of a 'high pay off' wheat technology which found its first ready acceptability in areas that were already favoured in terms of their infrastructure and institutional network. Its subsequent stagnation points to a lack of resilience and adaptability to new requirements, both in the institutions which are meant to serve as the main channels of promotion, and in public policy

'Workers participation' (or in the present context 'farmers participation') which has become a cliché phrase in polite political circles, administratively continues to be an alien concept. Whether in fact such participation can become a reality, without effective land reform measures for increasing the institutional and political bargaining power of the small farmer, is a debatable point. Likewise, the concept of 'appropriate technology' cannot have meaning in the absence of a culture for adaptive research. Also, while the 'idea' of an integrated approach to agricultural development has no doubt been accepted, the idea has yet to be given concrete shape

Basically, a necessary climate in which a new rural technology can spread and flourish has yet to be generated; and the political and administrative 'will' needed to create such a climate has yet to make itself felt. What is perhaps most obvious is that without the creation of a more favourable climate for incorporating technological change as a growth process and not merely as an occasional 'grafting' of borrowed technology, the long term path of Indian agriculture is likely to proceed in small jerks, by no means sufficient to restore health and vigour to the economy.

32. Expert Committee of Assessment and Evaluation (1966, p. 433): *Intensive Agricultural Development Programme, Second Report (1960-65)* Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation, Government of India.

31. Expert Committee on Assessment and Evaluation (1969, pp 44-45), *op cit*

Relevant education

V. KRISHNAMURTHY

THE picture of rural India presents problems and paradoxes which come in the way of rural development. It is true that aspects like total cropped area, supply of fertilizers, supply of high yielding varieties of seeds, total food-grain production, index number of agricultural production, and index of yield per hectare, which are usually considered to be the barometers of rural development, have increased during the last 20 years. But this did not reduce the gap between the standard of living of the rural and urban sectors. Therefore, there is something seriously wrong either with the barometers and indices with which rural development is measured or with the very concept of rural development. Perhaps, both the concept and barometers need revision and also redefining and improving. Hence the need for examining the nature and scope of rural technology and education and their impact on rural development.

Unfortunately, Indian villages have existed just to grow food grains for the urban population and work as urban satellites. This attitude is reflected not only in the urban population, but even in the administration and planners who are

supposed to offer guidelines for rural development.

Indian towns and cities are not the natural outgrowth of Indian villages; on the other hand, they are the imperfect replica of the industrialised west, a design indiscriminately carried to Indian soil. Besides, rural-urban gaps emerge because of the fact that the majority-rural population is controlled by the minority-urban population and in the course of this interaction, frictions arise leading to the rural crisis. Thus the rural crisis is the by-product of the rural-urban discrepancies and gaps in aspects like facilities, priorities and allotments.

It is an oft repeated complaint that the natural resources of rural areas have been siphoned for meeting the needs of the nearby urban and metropolitan population. The communication and transportation facilities have perpetuated the rural to urban flow of resources and essential items, rather than facilitating and encouraging the urban-to-rural or rural-to-rural flow. This has resulted in neglecting rural diet, rural medical and educational facilities and even the physical environment. For example, rural diet is comparatively deficient in calories and

proteins. Sanitation is quite inadequate and the environment, however aesthetically appealing, suffers from physical limitations, looks depressing and generates rural-to-urban migration. This leads to the neglect of rural occupations.

The major objective of our rural development programmes is to create self-generating village and rural organisations. But the problem is that we have not yet identified the factors and conditions which would stimulate rural inhabitants to plan actively and participate in the programmes for reviving rural economies. The continuous indifference towards rural welfare has generated a psychological diffidence and indifference among the rural population which, in its turn, has resulted in poor economic motivation.

It was wrongly assumed that the factors of growth in the industrial and agricultural regions were similar. This has only succeeded in subordinating the growth and development of the agricultural sector to the industrial sector. For example, budget allotments for rural drinking water purposes are quite insignificant compared to those made for industrial purposes. The over pampering of the industrial sector has done sufficient damage to the interests of rural growth, and the rural population has been looked down upon as merely subservient to the interests of the urban population.

Secondly, it has also been wrongly assumed that different sectors and different regions of the country are so well connected that by developing one sector, other sectors would automatically develop. For example, it was thought that the scientific and technical efforts to accelerate the tempo of industrial growth would result in a corresponding growth in the agricultural sector. In this sense, the village was considered a miniature replica of the town and, hence, it was concluded that the factors which controlled urban growth and the industrial sectors also operated in rural areas.

4 As a result of all these mistaken assumptions and erroneous conclusions, steps were taken blindly to plan and prepare the blue print for rural development on urban

lines. Thus, though there is no need for conversion of rural settlements into townships, planning for rural development has taken this type of acceleration.

These pitfalls in rural planning have reduced the role of agriculture and agro based industries in rural development. Another contributing factor is that we have not yet developed an indigenous and appropriate rural technology suitable to rural resources, needs and general set-up. It is often forgotten that an emphasis on agricultural development through rural technology is basic for any rural regeneration programme. We have to develop a technology suitable to the rural environment if we are to avoid transplanting foreign or even urban technology on rural soil. We must conquer the temptation and craze for machinery whenever it does not serve the purpose.

The indiscriminate introduction of foreign technologies or even those successful in our metropolitan cities cannot create a positive and satisfactory impact on rural areas other than the immediate 'Hawthorne effect' or 'the novelty effect'. Mere planning in terms of routine things like the reformulation of local consumption patterns, stimulation of organically related rural industries, and encouragement to local leadership will not have long term effects on rural development if we ignore the need for rural technology suitable to a rural environment. E.F. Schumacher advocated the need for 'intermediate technology' and set up the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) in London.

Rural technology is a must in the process of transforming the stagnating rural economy into an innovative, decentralised, self-generating one. The essential thing is that rural science and technology should be primarily oriented towards agriculture and associated organisations, whether ecological, social or physical, and should be significantly distinct from other industrial communities. The unique aspect of rural science and technology has to be recognised in the processes of policy making, planning, designing and executing of rural development programmes.

Rural technology has the potential for establishing structural, functional and productive linkages between agricultural technology, agro-based industries, changes in social organisations and consumption patterns of the rural masses. Without such active linkages it is difficult to achieve the objective of making village economies self generating and self sufficient.

It is useless to lapse into imitative rather than innovative technology; the former is the prevalent pattern in today's rural development programmes. Such an imitative technology is not need oriented and objective-based and, therefore, has a limited role to play. Imitative technology even when theoretically sound with sophisticated techniques, lacks suitability and validity and becomes useless in the rural context.

Rural technology has to take care of specifications. At present, the lack of specifications regarding tools, equipment and the production process to be adopted in the rural regions presents a major problem. We need to establish a 'Rural Standards Institute' (R S I.) for specifying and standardizing all the items — tools, equipment, process and the resource analysis related to rural science and technology. This means we have to study and analyse rural technology from the point of view of inputs, outputs and feed back, of course, including instrumentation and ecology. Lack of psychological and sociological support is the undefined and unnoticed dimension of rural technology. It is necessary to create a positive situation of social education including the propaganda techniques and mass-media and psychological orientation among the rural masses. Besides, even the system of formal education in the rural areas should be oriented towards needs, resources and limitations of the rural regions.

The special needs of the rural community where the technology is to be incorporated should be reflected in the innovation and adaptation processes. In this sense, a lot of research has to be undertaken to study the related

inter aspects of rural environment, both physical and social, in terms of needs, resources and limitations. Besides technical soundness and adaptation, innovation in rural technology has to proceed by keeping in mind (a) objective orientedness, (b) economic viability, (c) theoretical and technical soundness, (d) practical and utilitarian value and (e) flexibility, that is, the extent to which it can be adapted to the social and cultural environment.

The over-all value of rural technology depends on what it contributes to the development of rural regions. The goals and objectives to which the knowledge and control over the rural natural forces are directed would determine the benevolence or otherwise of rural technology. This requires certain important decisions and actions in policy making by chalking out the priority areas and superficial areas in rural regions and development programmes.

We have to evolve a new rural science policy along with changes in the industrial licensing policy keeping in view the benefit and welfare of the rural community. This is essential in removing the administrative hurdles and bottlenecks in the way of innovating, adapting and implementing of rural technology.

The identification and formulation of rural technology involves essentially two parties, namely, the planner/scientist who wants to introduce the technology, and the rural population who are its beneficiaries. Hence, the value judgement on the part of the planner as well as of the rural population are to be considered at the stage of innovation, adaptation and application of the technology.

As stated already, technical soundness is not the only criterion of an appropriate rural technology, though it is definitely one of the important criteria. The following are some other criteria.

* The extent to which rural technology arouses the urge to satisfy the basic and revealed

consumption needs of the rural masses.

* The extent to which rural technology gets integrated and coordinated with the rural social infra-structure and way of life.

* The extent to which rural technology helps to recognise the rhyme and rhythm of agricultural operations and rural occupations

It must be recognised that technological achievements of foreign technologies or even Indian metropolitan technologies are not suitable to rural regions, still they can help us in understanding the similarities and differences between the rural and urban areas in terms of resources, needs and limitations. Besides, rural technological programmes must be introduced very cautiously and on a selective basis, keeping in view the regional differences even in the rural set-up. Scientists should reorient themselves to the needs and conditions of the rural environment if they wish to innovate technologies suitable to that atmosphere. Society should be oriented towards utilising rural potentialities to achieve the goal of self-generating villages. This is possible through social education and the rural curriculum.

Education and technology are like the two sides of a coin. Education helps to innovate and propagate technology while technology helps to educate the community in solving the problems of life. Hence, rural technology and science should get reflected in the curriculum of the village school. Otherwise, any amount of rural technology which does not find a place in the educational system becomes futile and results only in superficial change and not any real change in the rural community.

The Indian rural community has certain characteristics which are significant in understanding the process of rural development and the associated constraints. The major characteristics that we can identify are: i) low rate of literacy, ii) limited rural occupations and avenues, iii) rural social customs and taboos including rural politics,

and iv) lack of services and facilities like health, transportation, communication and banking.

As a result of these, we come across a situation loaded with a low productive social structure which has its own impact on rural economy. In this context, two points seem to be relevant in my discussion on the role of education on rural development:

* — (a) the educational structure for rural areas,

* — (b) the role of the rural economist in planning rural education.

There is a lot of controversy on the type/nature of education for our rural masses. Those who champion the need for a uniform educational system, common to both rural and urban regions, forget the fact that the needs, resources, problems and prospects of the rural community are different to those of the urban community. On the other hand, those who favour a separate stream of education for the rural population forget the fact that rural and urban communities are interdependent and complementary in nature, especially in the aspects like marketing, migration and ecology. The result is that our urban educational curriculum taught in the rural setting has generated a stream of people not willing to live in rural areas and unable to participate in rural professions which are essential if the goal of a self generating village economy is to be achieved.

Rural occupations have to find their proper place in the curriculum of rural schools, and help to inculcate the concept of dignity of labour and develop confidence in the students to pursue rural occupations with better skills and with more satisfaction.

Rural economists were not given due opportunities for participating and guiding the educationist in designing a rural education. May be because such an integrated approach was not the mode of the past, but now we can no more ignore the economist in educational

planning. That is, rural demands and rural supplies should take their due position in the educational curriculum for rural schools. Besides, the production process and the participation in such a process depend mostly upon manual labour.

The word labour has unfortunately been given the wrong connotation. In its narrow meaning, the result has been obvious; manual labour was never accepted in schools as an educational objective. Labour involves at least three aspects, namely, physical work, material aspects, and the theoretical basis. But we view labour only as physical labour and feel that any education which does not lead to a white collar job is useless.

These factors explain why our educational experiments on work experience, rural curriculum, vocational education, etc., were unsuccessful and irrelevant. In this context we have to examine the scope for making relevant rural systems of education and the non-formal system of education could be oriented towards rural life and modified appropriately.

Rural education should not be considered second-rate education, but a system suitable to the rural areas. On the basis of the four characteristics mentioned earlier, we can deduce that rural education should achieve the following objectives.

- (i) to help the rural masses acquire the three fundamental skills of formal education, namely, reading, writing and arithmetic (3 R's);
- (ii) to develop occupational skills related to rural occupations like agriculture, water management, improved use of chemicals, and associated professions like cattle protection, poultry, fish culture, etc.;
- (iii) to provide a rational socialisation so that the rural population could be free from social under currents like superstitions, groupism etc.;

- (iv) to develop awareness among the rural masses in matters like sanitation, rural credit system, use of postal and banking facilities so that they would be freed from the clutches of pawn brokers and other types of organised exploitation.

The success of the rural curriculum depends on the following factors.

- (i) The extent to which skills and proficiencies related to rural jobs and occupations are correctly identified and analysed — job analysis,
- (ii) The extent to which the rural curriculum facilitates occupational training-curricular structure and its core,
- (iii) The extent to which the rural population accepts the rural curriculum as a means of satisfying its needs-positive attitudes. These three are essential to coordinate the three aspects of labour, namely, physical work, materials and theoretical basis. In other words vocationalisation of rural curriculum should necessarily involve such coordination.

As a first step we should identify the areas of commonality between the rural and urban regions in which the common syllabus can work, and also the areas where rural schools require special content for instruction. This special curriculum should be based on a thorough study of the process of rural productivity. This involves the following aspects:

- (a) Analyse the process of rural productivity into trainable skills and their level of complexity,
- (b) Define the skills in behavioural operations and develop the rural educational programme in terms of activities for developing the operations and skills,
- (c) Implement the designed curriculum keeping in view the

needs, work habits, resources and rural talents;

- (d) Evaluate the rural curriculum and its success in developing the skills related to hands, head and heart, i.e., physical, intellectual and social skills (3 H's) useful in rural development.

The best index of the success of the rural curriculum is the extent to which it is more effective than the traditional way of acquiring skills through hereditary occupations.

Non-formal education has equal potentialities for integrating and co-ordinating various social agencies and media. It is flexible and compact, but it needs to be systematically organised by following steps similar to a, b, c, d and e, mentioned above.

A committee should be formed at the national level to make a job-analysis of rural occupations and their associated skills so that rural education becomes relevant to the geographical factors and social needs. For example, a school in a coastal area better have its education related to fishing and its technology whereas a school in a 'black-soil' area can have a course related to growing cotton and looming.

The success of any educational system, whether formal or non-formal, depends on the extent to which it is need based and production oriented. It means, education has to operate in collaboration with other fields of knowledge concerned with production, namely, economics, science and technology and other social sciences like sociology and rural sciences.

The most important aspect of rural education is that we no longer benefit from the imitative type of education with a western orientation and urban bent. We have to evolve a system of rural education in collaboration with rural professions and industries. Educational development should be measured not in terms of degrees, but in terms of the social or occupational skills that it inculcates in the rural masses and in the nation.

Organic technology

R. P. MISRA

AMONG the many development programmes which have failed to keep up with the national pace of development, rural development perhaps stands out fairly prominently. It is now well recognized that rural development nuances cannot be borrowed from elsewhere, that rural development is not as easy as starting or expanding large organized industries, that it is far beyond the mere increase in agricultural production, and that it is essentially a remodelling programme requiring the values and organizational structures which must generate and assimilate the scientific temper and new technic ways.

The rural development policies pursued so far have not been alive to the complexities of rural culture and have tended to swing between two extremes — a romantic and liberal policy of keeping them aloof, and a 'big push' policy of technological change to increase production. Both these policies have kept rural areas on the periphery of the main currents of human development and prevented the emergence of a genuine indigenous scientific temper and appropriate technology which could sustain and be sustained by the new organizations/institutions which

alone could generate and support development.

The virtual separation of modern science and technology from the socio-cultural milieu has led to a multi-dimensional division of the society usually referred to as dualisms: industrial *versus* agricultural, urban *versus* rural, science *versus* religion, poor *versus* rich, intellectual *versus* manual. Modern science and technology, appropriated as it is by the upper stratum of the society under one pretext or the other has given rise to a number of human development problems. In the first place, its own growth and advancement has remained stagnant, and in the second place it has kept the societal developments at a low ebb. The technology for rural development has remained a preserve of the 'honoured' few; its accessibility to the rural populace continues to be denied. Rural areas have been treated as potential markets for industrial goods and the terms of trade have been unfavourable to them. Man has become a factor of production, and not the 'end' of production.

Science and technology, indigenous to India, has not been allowed

to intermingle with the one borrowed from abroad. As a consequence, the internal genius for innovation has remained stunted and the external technological doses have remained alien — productive but not generative and useful but not usable by the masses.

The end product of all development is the flowering of human personality. Human beings have basic needs food, shelter, clothing, health, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment — or, even worse, disrupts them — is a travesty of the idea of development. We are still in a stage where the most important concern of development is the level of satisfaction of basic needs for the poorest sections of the population. The primary purpose of economic growth should be to ensure the improvement of conditions for these groups.

A growth process that benefits only the wealthiest minority and maintains or even increases the disparities between and within countries is not development. It is exploitation. And the time for starting the type of true economic growth that leads to better distribution and to the satisfaction of the basic needs for all is today. We believe that thirty years of experience with the hope that rapid economic growth benefits the few but will 'trickle down' to the mass of the people has proved to be illusory. We therefore reject the idea of growth first, justice in the distribution of benefits later.

'Development should not be limited to the satisfaction of basic needs. There are other needs, other goals and other values. Development includes freedom of expression and impression, the right to give and to receive ideas and stimulus. There is a deep social need to participate in shaping the basis of one's own existence, and to make some contribution to the fashioning of the world's future. Above all, development includes the right to work, by which we mean not simply having a job but finding self-realisation in work, the right not to be alienated through production

processes that use human beings simply as tools.'¹

What type of technology would bring about a development envisaged above? Are the rural development policies we have followed so far really conducive to the generation of appropriate technology? What policies should we follow in the years ahead to bring about a rural transformation including the development of an appropriate scientific and technological base? These and others are some of the questions which constitute the main theme of this paper. It outlines a new approach to rural development which humanizes technology and makes it a tool of organic development of human society.

Looking back at our development experiences of the last thirty years or so, we note two important approaches emerging. Each offers a framework or design of change and is based on certain *a priori* or empirical theories. We would call them 'models', to use the term a bit loosely. There certainly are other models too; but the two discussed below are the ones most relevant to our theme, and perhaps the most inclusive ones.

The Gandhian Model is almost a forgotten model in India, yet perhaps the only model which can be said to be indigenous — a model which has been tested, though in the controlled conditions of Sevagram and which has emerged from within the realities of the rural situation.

The Gandhian model of rural development is a sub-model of overall national development. Gandhi made a bold attempt to offer a development model wherein man, not growth, was the prime objective. 'As a moderately intelligent man, I know that men cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialisation. But I have a great concern in introducing machine industry. The machine produces much too fast and brings with it a sort of economic system that I cannot grasp. I do not want

to accept something when I see that its evil effects outweigh whatever good it brings with it. I want the dumb millions in our land to be healthy and happy. I want them to grow spiritually. As yet for this purpose we do not need the machine. There are too many idle hands. But as we grow in understanding, if we feel the need for machines we certainly have them, once we have shaped our life on *ahimsa*, we shall know how to control the machine'.²

Gandhi's emphasis lay not on technology but the men, their organization, their value systems and their ethics. To him the machine was only a tool, it is amoral and not immoral as many have interpreted. Technology as conceived by him was much more than the machine, the artifacts, the tools, the automobiles, etc. It consisted of the skills and habits of the people who used them. And, above all, it was only a means to an end — which was the development of man. Gandhi did not consider technology outside the society. Society produced technology and technology produced society in an endless mesh of action and interaction. One could not over-ride the other.

The Gandhian model is highly integrated and organic. It is progressive, humane and synthetic. According to Gandhi, real development was one which was organic in the sense that the growth and development of each element of the social system was not only rapid but also proportionate. Excessive growth of a single element is cancerous. And that is what modern society suffers from.

The technocratic growth model is essentially western and based on the experiences of the present day so-called developed economies. As opposed to the organic growth model, it relies heavily on gigantism in industrialization, urbanization and even in agricultural development. Gigantism is promoted and nurtured because it is firmly

1. *World Economists Demand*, The Co-cyoc Declaration, published by the Forum for Socialist Studies, Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore

2. Cited by V K.R.V. Rao, in 'Gandhian Alternative to Western Socialism', paper read in a seminar on the Relevance of Gandhi to Modern Times, Delhi.

believed by the politicians, bureaucrats and the technocrats alike that then alone can 'growth' be rapid, economies of scale can operate; and a modern economy can be built. This applies to both capitalistic and communistic systems of economies.

There is a firm belief that modern technology has solved the problem of production. 'Not only is this belief firmly held by people remote from production and therefore professionally unacquainted with the facts — it is held by virtually all the experts, the captains of industry, the economic managers in the governments of the world, the academic and not-so-academic economists, not to mention the economic journalists. They may disagree on many things but they all agree that the problem of production has been solved; that mankind has at last come of age. For the rich countries, they say, the most important task now is "education for leisure" and, for the poor countries, the "transfer of technology".'³

The market mechanism is supposed to correct any disequilibria in the system, so much so that in the long run there can be no poverty and distributive injustice. Even the environmental pollution is essentially a problem of technological development in the sense that the technology which generates pollution has also the power to stop it. If we could divert just enough resources!

In this model, man is a factor of production and if the production is assured the happiness of man is also assured. And nature is something to be exploited. 'Modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature, but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature forgetting that, if he won the battle, he would find himself on the losing side'.⁴

There are several variants of this model but they all converge on a

heavy emphasis on technology and 'hugeness' of projects, for that alone can ensure mass production. The model does recognize the close relationship between technology and other sectors of the society and the ill-consequence of the maladjustment among them, but brushes much of these aside as the price which a society must pay for growth and development.

The model of rural development being experimented in India since independence is a variant of the second model. It was based on certain premises which are worth discussing here. Even though the Gandhian model was readily available, the followers of Gandhi treated it more as a tool to win freedom than to eradicate poverty and hunger in the post-independence period. While it is true that Nehru was never at ease with the western model, the exigencies of the post-independence geopolitical developments, and his firm conviction that the development of modern science and technology was the answer to India's backwardness, did not allow him to integrate economic growth and technological innovations in the humanistic philosophy he not only believed in but also practised all through his life. Nehru was in a hurry although his sense of time was essentially Indian. Nehru had a large following and his impact on India's development policies was immediate and far reaching.

Some halting attempts were made to integrate the Gandhian concept of organic development with Nehru's insistence on modern science and technology. The community development programme launched in the fifties was a living and major example of this. But in matters of implementation it had nothing Gandhian. In other spheres — industry, power, irrigation, etc., gigantism was the rule, as it is today.

It has been our misfortune that we took the Gandhian model either so emotionally that we did not consider it desirable to improve upon it, or so irrationally that we found it irrelevant. The Gandhian

model offered a firm base to work on and to evolve a real Indian model of development. But we were in too great a hurry to think of a new model of development. The success story of the western model convinced us about its relevance to the decision makers, the ruling class, the elites.

The western model gave rise to a number of problems, the full impact and implications of which are visible now. The premise on which it operates is the spread effect generated by market forces — innovations must spread spatially as well as sectorally, for a vacuum must automatically be filled up by excess energy elsewhere. Large industrial enterprises must generate change in their hinterland through a number of linked enterprises. Similarly, cities should spread developmental forces in their hinterland.

This model however ignores one very important basis of our society, i.e., its feudal structure. We have inherited this structure from the past — not too distant a past — but rather the past of the last few centuries. Our society is divided into two major compartments, the monopoly group and the marginalized group. These groups appear in different garbs and forms. This dualistic nature of society is fed on mutual exploitation which manifests itself in such concepts as core-periphery, poor and rich etc., etc. The system as a whole operates in such a way that a large number of people must stand marginalised and become the tools of a vested interest group. The values of even the poor in such a social system are derived from the rich sections of society, so that the poorest are exploited by all including the poorer and the poor.⁵

In such a situation, technology, in its material sense, becomes a tool in the hands of a few to exploit the poor. And if technology is such that it is accessible only to those who have specific powers of

3 E F Schumacher *Small is Beautiful*, London. Sphere Books, 1974, p 10

4. *Ibid.*

5 R P Misra, *Target Groups in Regional Development*, (Mimeographed) Institute of Development Studies, Mysore University.

a non-traditional type (mental, monetary, etc.), then it is far less accessible to the marginalized group. The only way this mutual exploitation could continue is through legitimization of the feudal social structure. Since no institution can survive the loss of legitimacy in either of its two major senses, inward legitimacy in the sense of justification on the part of the people who operate the institution, and outward legitimacy or acceptance on the part of the people who constitute its environment, it has been a constant endeavour of the monopoly groups in the society to legitimize the feudal order. Not only was wealth usurped, in fact in the recent past the means of producing the wealth was the major target.

As a consequence of a legitimized feudal social order, the spread of technology has been limited, if at all. While the indigenous technology was rejected outright, the non-indigenous remained in the hands of a few. The educational system, the knowledge structure, the language and literature and the arts all worked and work in favour of the few. In spatial terms we get cities which have access to modern technology and the villages which are denied this. Sectorally speaking, we have the modern factory establishments which have access to technology and agriculture which is denied it.

It would be only a truism to say that the law and the legal system is perhaps the greatest institution modern society has created to deny access to means of production for a majority. In the past, community

and group action was the basis for work and recreation. Now it is individual enterprise. We are made to believe that the break up of the joint family system is good; that agriculture is not the real basis for progress; that all that is traditional is bad and so on. One may even say that law is the greatest enemy of development in so far as individual initiative for community welfare is concerned and so long as it remains the last refuge of the vested interests of human society

The above analysis should not be construed to be doctrinaire. It is a realistic analysis of a real situation. The mechanism of the monopolization and marginalization processes are indeed many. A few of them are mentioned below.

The siphoning off of the resources of the marginalized people and areas is one. The price mechanism, the credit system, the incentive system, etc., always work in favour of the better off. To illustrate this point, let us examine the deposits and advances of four metropolitan cities of India *vis-a-vis* the rest of the country.

It is clear from the table that the four metropolitan cities get a fairly large chunk of resources mobilized elsewhere — in the smaller cities. This is how the metropolitan areas grow.

From a single village group panchayat (consisting of 5 villages), about Rs. 25,000 go to various lending agencies as interest. A village panchayat which can pay Rs. 25,000 per annum to an out-

side agency must be a rich one. This is, however, not so. It consists of just average villages of India full of poverty, malnutrition, poor health and sanitation and low productivity. The villages are forced to pay this huge amount only because they have lived for generations in poverty and misery. The modern institutions created by modern society work on norms and principles which are essentially anti-development. They, in the final analysis, prove to be exploitative. For the poor villagers what difference does it make whether the lending is done by the banks or the money lenders? In both cases the resources are siphoned off.

The flyover and by-pass mechanism of development supports the siphoning off mechanism by neglecting and leaving off the poorer areas and people in the development process. It is often said that cities are the harbingers of change and urbanization is an indicator of development. This view does not appear to have empirical foundations. Cities of modern times do bring about 'change' but not development. The impact of our cities in their rural hinterlands is rarely positive. The siphoning off mechanism operates in favour of the city whereas from the city to its environment the flyover and bypass mechanisms operate.

Educational programmes are perhaps the best examples for illustrating this phenomenon. Our education system basically remains elitist, anti-work, and alienated from society. One of the basic goals, imperceptible though, of education, is to give a feeling of belonging to a society which is different from which the participant comes. But the last thirty years of changes have really made no dent in the old system. The talk about vocationalization of education is still talk. Perhaps funds are earmarked; some projects are implemented. But it is fairly well understood that this would not succeed. We are again trying to do something based on truncated thinking. There is a need for more comprehensive educational

	Deposits (Crores of Rs)	Advances (Crores of Rs)
Bombay	1,756.20	1,609.60
Calcutta	906.92	988.71
Delhi	873.73	622.10
Madras	337.29	297.37
A. Total for 4 cities	3,934.14	3,657.78
B. Total deposits and advances of Scheduled commercial banks in India.	10,087.00	7,090.98
C. Total A as a per- centage of total B	39%	51.6%

planning than 10+2+3 and vocational education.

The current education centred as it is in urban areas does not percolate down to the villages. In the rural areas, we have schools and at times colleges, too, but no mass education. Education today caters to the needs and demands of a few. Urban elites and rural 'Kulaks' are linked through an educational over-bridge or by-pass. The poor, the ignorant, the disabled and the underprivileged who need education most to push themselves up in the socio-economic hierarchy are left behind. They are marginalized.

A similar illustration can be drawn from development of power resources. Supply of electric power does not appear to make any major impact on the economy of the poor and marginalized. Domestic use is possible only if there is a house to live in. Use of power in agriculture is possible only when there is land to do agriculture. But even those who have the house and land, are unable to use power to their advantage. The power supply is regulated by rules of supply framed by the supplier and not by the users. Users cannot use the power the way they want. As a consequence, no sooner than electrification is done, the streets are dark again. The community fails to pay the cost of street lighting, for it does not value it the way the supplier values it.

Who uses the power then? The man who is powerful. Power makes him more powerful and helps him to marginalize more people. Again the flyover development occurs. The people who need power most, for they are powerless, are by-passed.

A more classic example of the by-pass phenomenon is the water supply to urban areas. The reservoirs from which water to urban areas is supplied are fed by rural areas. But when a pipe line carrying water from these reservoirs to the cities passes through villages, it cannot discharge part of the water for the village folks. The obvious reason is: it is an urban water sup-

ply scheme. How can urban water be supplied to rural areas, even though the source of water is essentially the rural tracts. One can multiply examples, for in every walk of life this hiatus is glaringly visible to those who want to see.

While, on the one hand, technology has improved to a level that man can reach outer space, on the other it has rendered millions of people poor, helpless and miserable. The textile mills have battered the thousands of handloom workers, the sugar mills have eliminated lakhs of small crushers, the oil mills have rendered innumerable animal driven oil press owners jobless. The question is: development for what?

It is not the intention to suggest that India must go back to the days of the *Vedas*; what is emphasized here is the tragedy underlying each modern technological change. This tragedy can be avoided, if our development policies do not allow technology to run amuck. We must create social institutions and organizations to tackle the ill-effects of technology and in that process, perhaps, the technology itself would have to be moulded to fit in the new social system. We cannot mould man beyond certain limits to technological requirements, but technology can be moulded in any way we want to suit it to human needs.

We are trying to industrialize and urbanize on an inadequate rural technological base without realizing that the existing developed countries had their break-through first in agriculture. The industrial revolution really followed the agricultural revolution or at least they worked together supporting each other. If our intention is to change the course of development so that it is organic and human, then agriculture is again the base to start with. Distortions in rural life are not so serious as in urban and industrial life.

The current emphasis in India on integrated rural development is perhaps the consequence of the realization, though late, of the role

of agriculture and rural society in development processes. But how tragic it is to note that more often than not we have done and are still doing mostly disintegrated work in the name of integrated rural development. In fact, we have now come to such a pass that any activity, even remotely concerned with rural development, can be branded as an integrated rural development programme.

We have at present scores of programmes which go under the banner of integrated rural development. Some of them are prepared by a group of scientists, some others by social scientists, agricultural experts, etc. There is bias, built-in prejudice and ethnocentrism in all these projects. After the failure of the community development programme, we appear to be convinced that modern science and technology would solve our problems. A deeper analysis of the situation, however, tells us that it is not really science and technology *per se* which would help develop our rural areas, although one should not minimize the importance of both. It is accessibility of these to marginalized people and its assimilation in the rural social system which is going to make a difference. Unfortunately, this very significant dimension of rural development remains neglected in the science-technology oriented rural development programme.

It is not enough that social issues are recognised as important. What is relevant is the place they are accorded in plan formulation and implementation.

There is need for experimentation, adoption, adaptation and modification. While one should watch the new trends in integrated rural development, one must open more than one channel for dialogue and experimentation. It is with this end in view that the University of Mysore has launched its own programme of integrated rural development. 'Operation Bharami' as the project is popularly known is not a project of the conventional type to carry the inputs of various kinds including those of science and technology alone to the people. It is an integrated rural development project in

the real sense. It does not consider the sectoral approach to planning and development appropriate — it is the man who is the central theme. Economic development is a must — not of agriculture, industry, etc., but of the man. Each household must stand on its own feet and all sectoral resources and capabilities must be put at the disposal of the people to attain self-reliance.

Operation Bharani does not attempt to teach people. It attempts more seriously to learn from the people for those in the university have just realized that the so-called mute and illiterate are better educated than many of them. The people understand their environment better than the university men do and they are saner than most of them. It is by learning from the people that we are able to generate development. What is needed is to put the old cooperative and community endeavour back in gear. We are working with the people by way of eliminating the blocks we have put on the road to progress.

There is no aspect of rural life that we have neglected in our project. We do realize that everything is not equally important. We also realize that everything does not have to be done simultaneously to make a breakthrough. But unless each action takes note of the total situation and its implications for various facts of rural life, we cannot achieve the objectives of integrated development.

The project attempts to make modern science and technology also accessible to the people but only those parts of it which are relevant and which have been removed from the rural life in the past. The essence of the project is however not this. It is the institutions and organizations of the people which can adopt, adapt and improve whatever evolves from within and comes from outside. If we can succeed in evolving such institutions and in eliminating the plethora of middlemen who in essence are the channels of exploitation, we can make the village a production centre for agricultural, industrial and other products including culture once again. That we consider to be the ultimate test.

Mud architecture

B. S. BHOOSHAN

MUD accounts for more than 50 percent of the rural houses in India. Even in urban areas it plays a major role in providing shelter for the underprivileged. Although houses built completely of mud are not common in India, mud constitutes a major walling, flooring and plastering material. It is also used as roofing in many places where rainfall is low. Architects and planners generally look upon mud structures with contempt. So do many others. The chief reason for this may be the association of mud with dirt and its alleged undignified look. Of course, it has certain drawbacks. Yet, considering the many plus-points it has, mud deserves better attention from architects and researchers, than it has so far received.

By mud architecture is meant those architectural techniques and

*This article is a part of a feature written for EARTHSCAN, London.

productions in which mud constitutes a major building component. This indigenous architecture has evolved unself consciously through a tradition built out of necessity and shaped by environmental and cultural forces.

The major uses of mud in buildings are as structural material in walls and foundations, roofing materials, insulation as ceiling and curtain walls, plaster, flooring materials, and binding/cementing material.

The use of mud as a cementing material is very common even in modern architectural techniques. Flooring is usually done by a pasty mixture of mud and cowdung or ash. Plastering for walls are also done the same way. In some places, a special variety of clay is used as paint. Mud floors and plaster are used in building of other structural materials also. However, basically mud architecture is the use of mud as structural, insulating and roofing material. The use for the foundations is fast vanishing though it was a very common practice in some parts of India.

Mud walls are found in almost all rural parts of India. However, the once ubiquitous use of mud is slowly vanishing and now it is used mostly by the poor sections mainly for its cheapness. The rich are shifting to other modern materials. It is not frequently used in areas of high rainfall and where wood and other plant products are available almost freely such as in the hilly forest tracts. Again, the use of mud depends on the quality of soil/mud locally available.

The techniques of wall construction vary enormously in different parts. Generally the following varieties are found — mud lumps, —reinforced mud with reed or bamboo, —wattle wall with mud plaster, —mud concrete, —sundried bricks.

Walls of mud lumps is the most common and simplest of all. Mud is prepared as a paste first. Most often the preparation is done manually on the ground using a shovel

and kneading by the feet. The mud should not be very clayey. Sometimes ash or cowdung or straw is also added for good consistency. Ash is a common practice in Karnataka while straw is added in Northern India, especially in the States of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The mud paste is then rolled and placed in horizontal layers. In Southern West Bengal, where fine clay is available, it is kneaded by foot in the midst of the fields, cut up with a spade into chunks which are laid one on top of the other. They greatly resemble unfired bricks. Normally the walls are about 1' 6" thick and are constructed in stages. Each stage would be 1' to 3' in height and the next course is laid only after the layer below dries. These layers of construction can be clearly seen if walls are left unplastered. In some places in Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh, twigs and palm leaves are used to cover the mud wall to protect it from the rains.

In places where reeds or bamboo are available, mud walls are reinforced with them but they are usually not load bearing. They act only as curtain walls as the load will be taken by the wooden poles. The normal practice in Southern India (Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) is to press moist mud firmly on either side of a frame of split bamboo weaved vertically and horizontally which is nailed or tied down to vertical poles.

In areas where reeds are available in plenty such as parts of North Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Brahmaputra Valley, Orissa, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, a layer of mud is plastered over a wall of bamboo or reed wattle. In this case cowdung or ash (sometimes straw or hay) are also mixed with the mud. In Maharashtra walls of basket work are reported to be daubed with mud or 'mati' which is a combination of mud + stone + clay. On the banks of the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh, date palm or palmyra leaves are used for the walls and mud is plastered over.

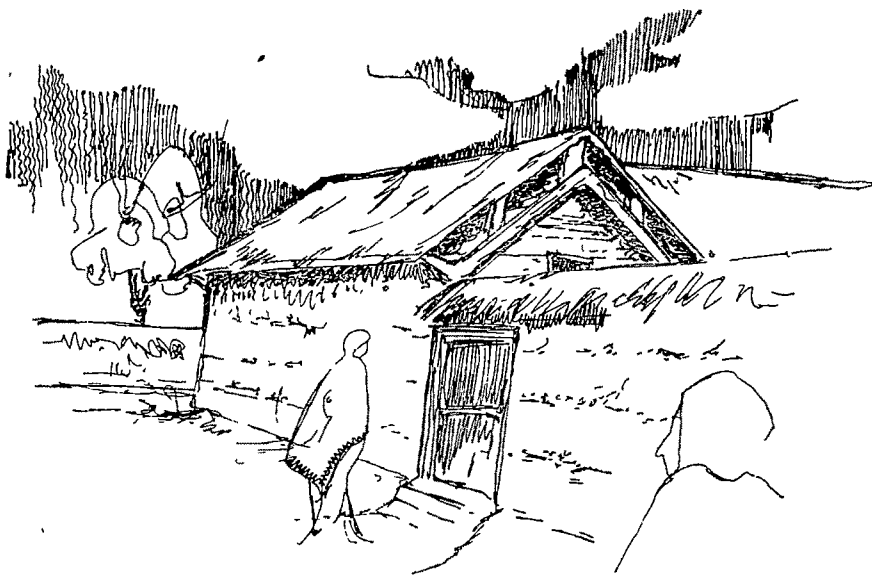
An interesting variety of mud wall construction is found in some

areas of Himachal Pradesh. Here mud is prepared as in the case of concrete, mixing moist earth well with small stones, and clay. A frame is made of two wooden planks to form the shuttering and the moist mud and stone mixture is rammed in between by beating. This is left to dry for a day or so and in the meantime the other portion of the wall is prepared likewise. The wooden planks are placed above the dried portion and filled with a mud mixture and beaten up. The process is repeated till the walls reach the desired height. Doors, windows and openings are fixed as the construction progresses. Sometimes split bamboos are inserted in the walls during construction so as to serve against possible burglaries. Walls are usually 1' 6" thick.

Windows and openings are minimal in all these types of mud walls. In some places beautiful holes form the opening. More often small holes are provided towards the top of walls just below the roof.

Mud bricks or sun-dried bricks are becoming very common. Bricks are made manually using ordinary mud or good clay if available and then dried well in the sun. Mud bricks are normally larger than kiln burned bricks and have no standard sizes. These unbaked bricks could be used in the same way as the baked ones. They give a good finish to the walls if plastered over and are stronger than other forms of mud walls.

The mud roof is not as common as mud walls. It is used only in places where rainfall is very low, normally below 25 inches a year. Mud roofs are common in a contiguous belt over the western part of India starting from the Deccan plateau and upto Kashmir in the North. They are fairly widespread in Southern Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, some areas in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, some areas in Madhya Pradesh and the central parts of Maharashtra. In the South, mud roofs are found only in some parts of Karnataka and Andhra. In Kerala and Madras, rainfall is not



DOUBLE ROOF FROM ORISSA
-mud roof below and thatched roof above

favourable for this form of construction.

Mud roofs are normally flat terraced roofs. Mud domes and mud vaults are not found in India and sloped mud roofs are very rare. A double skin variety of sloped roof is reported from Orissa. In this case, the mud roof acts only as a ceiling so as to protect the house from fire while a second roof of grass or leaves is constructed over to protect the mud roof from rain. A problem with mud is that it will be easily washed away on a sloping side

Wherever mud is used as roofing material, it is employed with materials like wooden joists, planks, stone slabs, reeds, bamboo matting, etc. The horizontal roof is built by covering the supporting platform of wooden planks or reeds/bamboo matting with a layer of earth. Earth is beaten down and then plastered. If necessary, with an emulsion of cowdung. Courses of leaves may be added sometimes to prevent earth from dropping through the gaps of the reed or bamboo mats. A few examples of slightly different varieties of mud roofs are given below.

In Kurnul area in Andhra Pradesh, the roof is formed by spreading flat sheets of stones over coun-

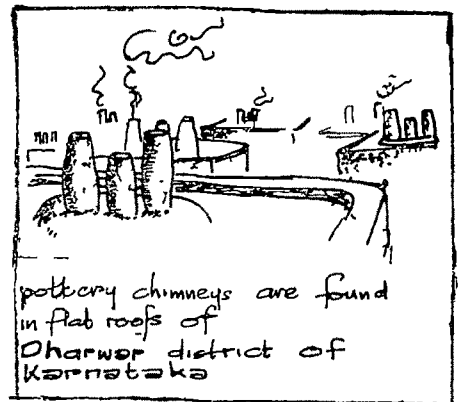
try wooden beams and the upper portion is covered with saline clay. In Mehaboobnagar in the same State, parapets on the edges of roofs are seen covered with leaves of date palm to prevent erosion by the rain.

In the northern districts of Karnataka (Bellary, Belgaum, Dharwar and Bidar) the roof is laid over a matting of bamboo or reeds placed on wooden joists. A layer of earth 1' thick called '*mel mudde*' is rammed into place. They say it requires repairs once in three years.

Even in the adverse climatic conditions of Kinnar district of Himachal Pradesh, the flat mud roof is common and is known as '*Khayap*'. *Khayap* is in use even over wooden or brick walls. Layers of *Bhoj Pat-tar* (shakpang) and local bushes are spread over thick wooden planks. On this frame is laid a layer of earth, 6 to 8 inches thick, to form the roof. The earthen roof is compact and properly rammed and laid in graduated processes. Mud which is called *phating* is carefully spread and beaten by small wooden clubs called *teput*. The masons and others press the mud by walking about on the roofs. Some times children are invited to play on the roofs when under construction. Once the mud layer has set smoothly and is thoroughly pressed, water is sprinkled over it. The beating and pressing

process continues till the roof is considered strong enough to hold back rain or snow. Mud roofs leak in heavy rains any way. During the winter, the snow is immediately shovelled down from the roofs as soon as it stops snowing to avoid leakage or else the roof can collapse under the weight of accumulated snow. The major reason for a flat roof even in the adverse climatic conditions of Himachal Pradesh seems to be the scarcity of plain land for threshing and making hay in this hilly tract.

In some parts of Karnataka mud is used to form the roof even without the lower support of bamboo matting or straw. This requires expert skill. Joists are spaced at an interval of about 9" to 12". Mud is taken in small lumps and pasted horizontally over the beam. Inch by inch the mud cantilever grows till it reaches the next beam and the process is repeated. Between the beams the mud roof forms a small vault. Holes are formed on the mud roofs in some cases for light. During rain, these holes are covered with



earthen pots. In Dharwar area in Karnataka, pottery chimneys are provided for the escape of smoke. In northern India, smoke does not create a problem as most of the cooking is done outside in the courtyards or verandah.

Although mud is a common building material in rural India, buildings constructed completely of mud are rare. Usually it is used in combination with other materials. Mud walls are frequent, the mud roof is not as much. However, the mud roof is used even for houses of brick or stone or timber walls.



a cluster from Salem district of Tamil Nadu Walls are plastered and roofed with palmyra leaves.

Foundations generally are of packed rubble and rammed earth in most parts of rural India.

The variety of forms and combination of materials can be grouped into three.

- Cylindrical forms with conical roofs of grass or leaves;
- Roughly rectangular form with sloping roofs of tiles or leaves;
- Cubes with a) mud walls and mud roofs, b) mud roof and brick or stone wall.

Cylindrical forms consist of the most ill-accommodated huts, mostly in the tribal areas. The round hut seems to be the poor man's house form. It is found frequently in the east coast, especially in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and also in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and some rural parts of Karnataka and Kerala. Normally, these types of houses have conical roofs made of grass, leaves, sheaves of dry corn stalk or jungle thatch. Walls are of either mud or wattle plastered with mud. The roof usually dominates this form. The round hut's formal

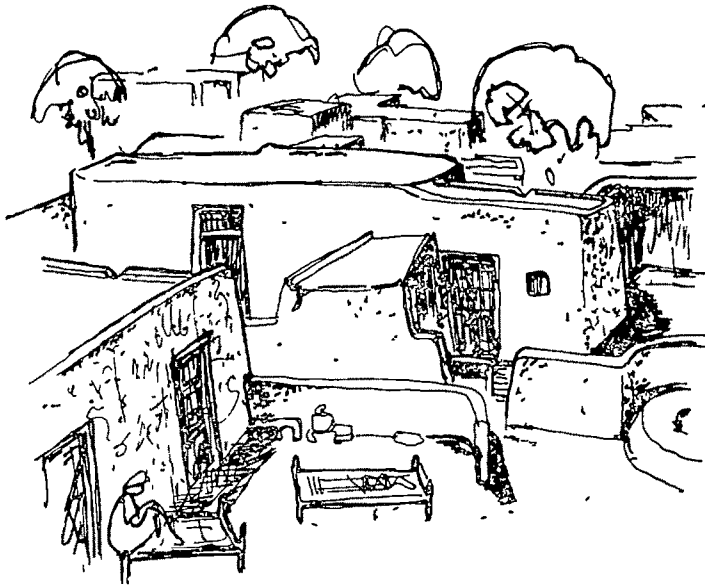


a typical hut from coastal Andhra Pradesh. Walls are plastered and decorated.

lineage may be drawn to Buddhist vaharas and stupas¹. Stability of the wall and climatic factors may be the reasons for this shape, at least in some areas. It is said to withstand the cyclonic winds in coastal areas well. Normally these round huts are 12—18 feet in diameter. They are generally miserable hovels with no opening except the door. Some well to do agriculturists in coastal Andhra Pradesh also have these type of dwellings, consisting of two or three huts. One of them serves as a bed room, the second as kitchen and third as cattle shed and for keeping agricultural implements, etc. In spite of their ill-accommodation, round huts present probably the most interesting and

large bungalows and are found in almost all parts of India. In this form also, the roof dominates. With roof edges projected out to provide protection to the mud wall, this form can be used in any climatic conditions. Once plastered, rarely can a distinction be made between properly constructed mud walls and brick walls.

Cubes with flat roofs are the third variety. Two subdivisions are found in this. One variety is with a mud roof on brick, stone, timber or wattle wall. The flat roof is resorted to for want of terrace or for scarcity of other cheap roofing materials like leaves, grass, etc. In this type the houses look more like



Mud houses in Bhindi Sardan village, Amreli district - a composition of solid cubes and courtyards. Mud walls plastered with cowdung and wheat straw. Cooking is done mostly outside. The low wall (in the foreground) mark of the kitchen.

curious rural architectural forms in clusters.

The rough rectangular plan with sloping roofs is the most common among rural house forms. Walls are of mud lump, wattle with plaster, reinforced mud or sun-dried brick and roofs may be of country tiles, leaves, slate or hay. They vary from single roomed huts to very

those made of stone, wood or brick as the roof does not form a major visual element. In fact it can be mistaken for an R.C. roof especially if the walls are not plastered with mud.

The purity, plasticity and richness of mud architecture is exhibited only in buildings made of mud roofs as well as mud walls. Even the interior presents rich curvilinear and decorative surfaces reminiscent

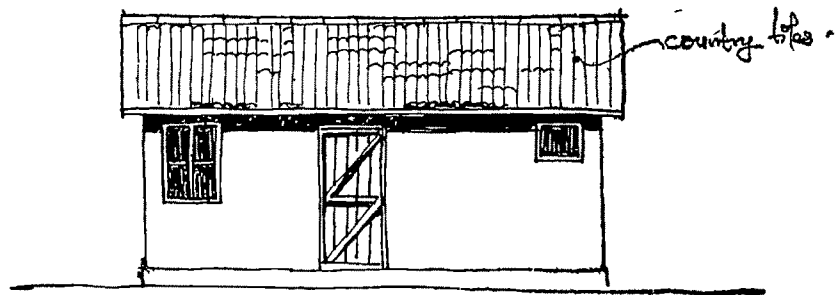
1. Suhas K. Biswas (1961)

of the expressionist style. The most beautiful examples are found in northern Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. With rounded openings, curved sculptured walls and smoothened corners they exhibit the richness of peasant culture in India.

Northern and southern varieties can be broadly distinguished. In the north, villages are often shapeless agglomerates. A central courtyard is normally the rule. Most of the cooking is done in the courtyard and outside. They are also used for outdoor sleeping in summer. The cubular mud architecture of northern India is an exercise in the composition of solid cubes and courtyards interlaced together. In the south, in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, contiguous rows of independent houses are arranged on the side of a street which is an integral part of the whole composition. Shapeless agglomerates are very rare

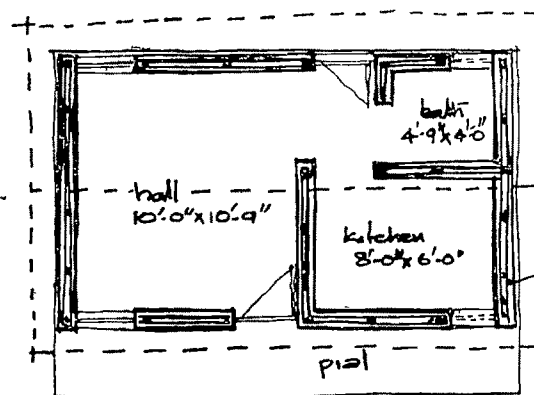
The rooms are often dark and ill-ventilated but they provide comfortable living in the extremes of tropical climate. Mud walls and roofs keep interiors warm during winter and courtyards and terraces are used in summer for outdoor living as well as cooking. The economy, climate and life style have played important roles in the evolution of this style of architecture. The Census of India reports from Magadi village of Dharwar District, Karnataka.

'The villagers prefer houses with mud walls and mud roofs chiefly for two reasons. The first and foremost reason is that they are cheaper than stone houses. In durability also they are not much behind stone houses, as the rainfall is scanty in this region. The labour involved is also comparatively not much as the local artisans can attend to the construction without much ado and many a time the owner himself can lend a hand to work. The other reason is that such mud constructions are conducive to the prevailing conditions. It is said that they help in air conditioning the interior by keeping it cool in summers and warm in winter. Non availability of build-



elevation

One of the prototype designs for people's housing scheme, Karnataka



plan

9" mud wall with split bamboo reinforcement nailed horizontally to either side of poles at 3' c to c

ing stones locally is also a third reason.²

In spite of its richness, variety and economy, mud architecture has attracted hardly any serious study. Very scanty reports of mud house types and settlements are found in the Census of India reports and village monographs. Very rarely do the official programmes consider mud as a viable material for housing the masses. Little improvement has been made over the age old methods. Whatever is present is a story of natural evolution.

The National Building Organisation (NBO) developed a bituminous spray for waterproofing the mud walls as far back as 1964. But it never became popular, may be for lack of dissemination. It is also to be remembered that the technology flow from research institutions to villages in these respects are minimal

² Census of India — village monograph series; — Magadi village

and the villagers always look towards them with suspicion

Only recently have governmental programmes given some attention to mud. The two examples are the rural housing programmes launched in Kerala and Karnataka States. Both these programmes tried to provide housing for houseless agricultural labourers under the People's Housing Scheme and started with almost no outlay. The lakh (100,000) housing programme in Kerala used mud bricks extensively. Specific designs were developed using sundried bricks and tiled roofs. In Karnataka, the Public Works Department prepared a series of designs with mud walls and roofs of tile, corrugated sheets or stone. The mud roof is not used in any one of the prototype designs. The method of construction adopted in these are the ones available locally. However, with the use of mud as

the major material, a house of 283 sq. ft. was possible to be made at a cost of 2500-3000 rupees. However, the programmes did not take off well after the pilot programme.

The major problem of housing in India is poverty. When the majority of the families live below the poverty line, housing is naturally relegated to a minor position. According to the reports, there is a horrifying shortage of housing. Added to that, about three-fourths of the already existing stock in the rural areas in India are considered uninhabitable. About 90 per cent of the houses (in rural areas) are of mud concrete or a combination of wood, bamboo and thatched roof.³

It is true that the rural environment is unclean, has no amenities or facilities and construction allows very little ventilation or light inside. But this is not confined to mud houses alone. Official reports seem to assess the problem incorrectly which results in taking wrong decisions. Mud is considered one of the poor materials, unsafe, unhealthy and impermanent and placed in the same category as leaves, thatch, etc. The result is that official programmes do not take mud seriously. But experience and certain reports show that mud houses can last up to 50 years if properly constructed. The problem of ill-accommodation and environment is not a problem inherent to mud architecture but applies to other aspects of planning and design, and life style.

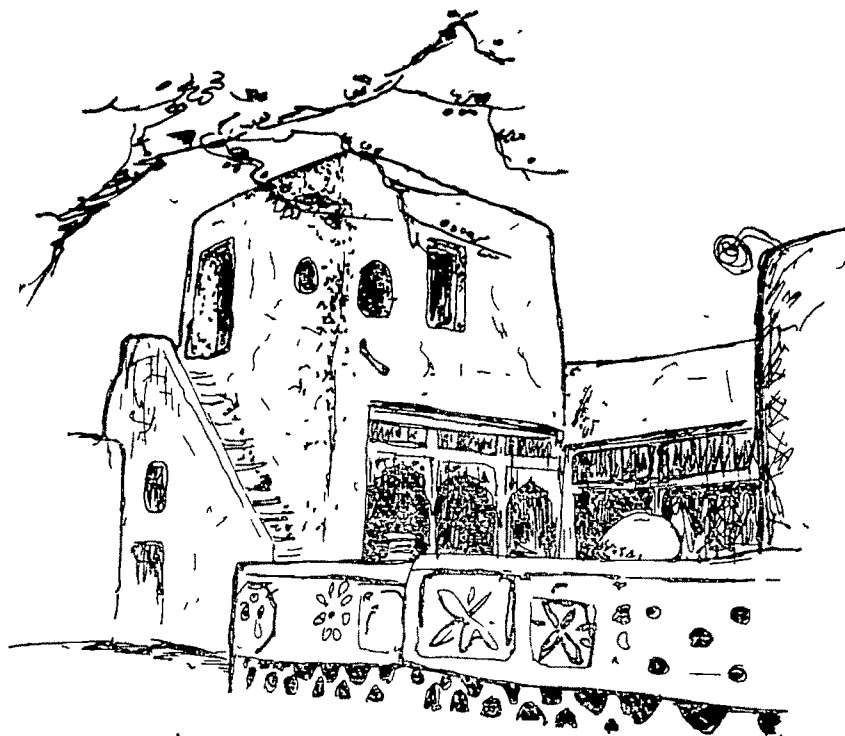
No programme can ever satisfy all the housing needs of the rural areas with concrete and bricks. First of all, there is no money for this and, secondly, there is scarcity of such materials. Therefore, the main criteria for housing in rural areas should be economy in construction and use of local materials. A third criterion is that programmes should be non-paternalistic in approach. Many programmes have failed mainly because they were paternalistic. If anything is to be achieved on a large scale, it must be done by the people; government,

can only give leadership and initiative. Skill and specialised labour should not be handicaps. Rural housing programmes should then use least specialised skills and the technology must be such that is locally available and the villagers can participate effectively. It must be remembered that labour is the only thing they can save and contribute.

Mud construction techniques satisfy all these criteria, for it is the cheapest material, available almost everywhere and its techniques are highly labour intensive. Normally, the material cost would be less than 25% of the total cost. The rest is all labour. For many tribal huts, the total cost never exceeds Rs. 150. As very little skill is required, villagers can join together and lend a hand in constructing houses which makes the process easy. They normally do so. It gives them a satisfaction of participating in the building process. The housing this way is not a product, but a

process which goes on and on with the people themselves attending to repairs, additions, etc. A house never becomes a commodity handed over to them for use as the end product of a purely industrial process. House building never achieves the character of an industry and does not require large corporations to manage it. It is and should be a part of life. Therefore, mud architectural techniques are thus culturally integrated into the life of rural India.

Climatically also, mud techniques are well suited for the tropics. With the property of low transmission of heat, they help to keep interiors cool during summer and warm in winter. Ecologically, mud techniques make little disturbance, compared to other materials, although mud extraction sites have to be carefully managed if large scale operations are carried out. Because of universal availability of mud, there is no need for such large scale operations, however. Once a mud house



Two storied mud house of a well-to-do farmer of Bhindi Sardan village, in Amritsar district of Punjab

walls are sculptural and decorated with figures. Ground floor has wooden grills. Roof is also of mud

³ Town & Country Planning Organization, New Delhi. *Towards a Settlement Policy in India* — 2000, February 1975.

serves its term it can return to earth without a problem unlike the modern materials such as cement concrete. In other words, mud architecture has the essential quality of 'renewability' which is an advantage for mass housing. If tomorrow's houses are to be throw away ones, does not mud hold an opportunity?

However, mud techniques are not without drawbacks. The major problems are two fold. One is with regard to safety and protection from pests. The second is a design problem in using mud roofs.

Mud walls are easily penetrable by pests like rodents and termites. The rodents makes small holes on the walls and sometimes large crevices under the floor. Periodical check up may prevent this. Yet, it is a safety problem. Termites move up the wall along the wooden posts and bamboo splits and can also affect the safety of the wall. This can happen quietly without even being noticed. Walls may collapse all of a sudden.

Another safety problem arises because mud does not hold wood well. With the result, gaps develop between the wood and the mud. Doors and windows fixed to mud walls are usually in a perpetual state of shaky existence, if the shutters are used frequently. This is why mud walls often have very few openings. In houses with reinforced mud or wattle walls plastered with mud, this problem is not that severe. Unburnt mud brick walls behave much better in this respect.

The problem relating to the mud roof is serious in places where the rain is heavy. Then the mud on the roof gets wet and weighs more. Consequently, the wooden beams below sag, making the mud crack. Moreover, the upper surface becomes concave and collects water. The roofs start leaking, affecting the life of the wooden beams also. This problem creates another one. It is noticed that room widths are kept very narrow to avoid possible sagging of beams. Most houses in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have very narrow rooms in which a cot cannot be kept across. Even in such narrow

rooms the roofs do leak under heavy rainfall.

Social acceptance of mud houses is also decreasing. Richer people would prefer to go for brick, stone or wood not only because they are more durable and safe, but also because they add to the prestige of the owner. With improved techniques mud may become more popular, even in urban areas.

For the future of mud architecture, it is important that the techniques be improved. The following research lines may be indicated.

- Research in the ways of improving the strength and safety of mud walls.
- Research on water proofing of mud roof, economically.

Mud walls could be improved by resorting to sun dried bricks, and this would improve the finish also. But the cost would increase and the construction time would be lengthened. Mud concrete with bamboo reinforcement might also be experimented with adding lime and cement to mud which are used as plaster in some places even now.

Water proofing of the mud roof could effectively improve the scope of mud roofs. Asphalt brick jelly or thin cement plaster could be used. Sloped mud roofs or even mud shells and vaults could also be experimented on with asphalt brick jelly or cement plaster. The Institute of Development Studies in Mysore is planning some experiments in this direction. For very low budgets, palmyra leaves or hay can be used to protect mud shells. This would increase the life of hay or leaves as well as improve safety from fire, pests and even burglars.

While mud plaster or cow dung plaster is advisable for very cheap constructions, mud+lime or lime+cement plastering would yield better results. Mud flooring however is inadvisable as it requires extreme care to keep clean. Any improvement in construction technique must underline the necessity for the ruralites to learn and adapt quickly. Designs of many rural house types also require changes and that is not very easy without improvement in construction techniques.

Banking for the poor

M. KISTAIAH

UPLIFTING the neglected sections of society through the assistance of banks has been considered, with characteristic tarantara, as the most revolutionary concept of this decade. It was thought that it would help the poor to move forward in the task of overcoming their age-old, tradition-bound and often miserable life. It was also felt that the banks would benefit the down-trodden with convenient lending procedures and free them from the 'Big Fish' who exploited the savings of the common man for their own growth and selfish ends. The attempt was also aimed at eliminating the usurious money lenders who charged exorbitant rates of interest which the poor could never repay in full and thereby remained indebted to them forever.

The following analysis is intended to understand the problem and to illustrate how, in the whole process of uplifting the weaker sections, problems crop up at every stage. These become insurmountable unless certain measures are adopted immediately with a view to reducing the blatantly wide gaps between the requirements of weaker sections and the performance of the banks.

To start with, identifying the weaker sections, so neglected until recently although in genuine need of financial assistance, is itself a difficult proposition. Although the Reserve Bank of India has given specific guidelines for such identification, the crux of the problem is how to attract the needy who are invariably ignorant of the banking system and facilities offered. A number of government agencies like the Scheduled Castes Development Corporation, the Backward Classes Development Corporation, the Small Farmers Development Agencies, the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Development Agencies, the integrated Tribal Development Agen-

cies, etc., have cropped up like mushrooms recently to facilitate the applicants who approach these agencies. In addition, some voluntary agencies like Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs also sponsor the applications to the banks for assistance. But this does not cover the entire population, for there are a large number of people who do not approach the above mentioned agencies for help.

Furthermore, there are many forms to be filled in and formalities to be observed at various stages, which are rooted in a deep seated traditional mistrust. In several cases the applicants are forced to run from pillar to post as though caught in the coils of a procedural rigmarole. The bank staff have yet to shed their habit of receiving customers at their well appointed counters or assuming the 'we-shall serve-those-who-come-to-us' attitude, because from the beginning they have been used to desk jobs associated with writing, copying, and accounting or checking with a cross tick for every tick made by somebody behind the adjoining counter. The appointment of Extension Agents on a large scale to work outside the counters and sell information about banking facilities to the neglected sections of the society is the need of the day. This is akin to the practice followed after the introduction of the CD and NES programme launched in 1952 mainly to focus on agricultural innovations and promote the adoption of better farming techniques to increase food production.

It is also pertinent to point out that the new customer is generally ignorant of banking culture but is, at the same time, impatient since his needs are immediate and he cannot afford to waste his time in bank corridors. An Extension Agent should be able to eliminate all these avoidable irritants by becoming a friend, philosopher and guide to him.

and removing the *pyravikar* from the scene whose help is now being sought by the weaker sections in filling up the forms and hastening the procedure in the offices of the sponsoring agencies and banks.

The internal organisation of the banks too has to be altered to make all the employees responsible for the work instead of depending on the supervisory staff for final decision. The staff thus released could be utilised for extension jobs, relieving the clerks from the routine job of being mere pen pushers. It is often felt that the bank staff should receive the weaker sections with greater warmth and should be able to spare more time to answer all the relevant (often irrelevant) queries and dispose off their work immediately.

It is discovered, at the time of verification of applications and other documents, particularly of small and marginal farmers, that many of the applicants do not possess correct documents in support of their land holdings. In several States, for quite some time, the transfer of property has been effected on a simple paper and the new owners have not got the transfer registered in their name legally so as to avoid registration charges and, in certain cases, procedural difficulties.

The problem is really hard in the case of tenants who have, over a period of time, acquired the right to till the land by sweat and toil. Ignorance of legal formalities and outdated rules, too, has resulted in the denial of financial help to the really needy cultivators. Perhaps under the existing banking rules and regulations, it is impossible to go to the rescue of the tillers of the soil without proper land holding records.

Thus, there is urgent need to simplify the age-old complicated forms and formalities prescribed and change the orthodox modes adopted by the commercial banks for granting loans to the weaker sections. Forms have to be simple and, at the same time, must not jeopardize the interests of the banks. The Reserve Bank of India has to

evolve standardised forms of vernacular languages to facilitate the understanding of the contents by the weaker sections instead of requiring them to blindly sign the forms which are, invariably, in English.

It is not far from the truth to state that private money lending, mostly in the form of chit fund schemes in the urban and semi-urban centres, has become a regular, large scale affair. Normally, the rich do not go in for such schemes, while the poor, in the absence of resources and credit worthiness, join them enthusiastically since the terms are attractive and money is readily available without any difficulty.

The poor, thus get into the trap and become easy victims. Besides, the evil is perpetuated as one chit is taken to repay the earlier one. In this way, the poorer sections get into a vicious circle from which there is no escape. It is pathetic to watch the petty shopkeepers paying large chunks of their earnings to the chit collectors, one after the other, everyday, late in the evenings.

In the case of low paid workers, the first of every month is a nightmare since a majority of them go home almost empty handed after making payments to the chits. These schemes have, thus, become a cruel burden on the weaker sections. A serious study would reveal how the tentacles of the chit fund schemes and their operations have spread. It looks as though there is a parallel banking system — predatory in its nature — in many urban and semi-urban centres. The government on its part would have to take stringent measures to eliminate this nefarious business. If necessary, banks must take up chit schemes in a more organised way and curb the existing unorganised and privately managed units.

The *mahajan* or *baniya* and sometimes the landlord are the ones who are largely involved in rural money lending in India. This is an age-old and deep rooted practice. Its grip over the masses being very strong, an even stronger attempt would have to be made to break it. Basically, it is ignorance that brings the

villagers to the door of the cunning money lender who gives guidance keeping his own interest in view.

Sometimes, the reasons for borrowing, even at exorbitant rates of interest, are cultural. To celebrate marriages and festivals — of which there are too many — and to perform funerals and innumerable other superstitious ceremonies, in a manner which outshines the neighbours or holds up his family prestige in the village, the farmer is ready to throw himself at the mercy of the predatory money lender. Periodic natural calamities like heavy rains resulting in floods or severe drought sometimes play havoc with the poorer sections. And, exploitation which is man made, completes the circle.

In the absence of timely help the oppressed invariably approach the money lender who, in India, is an all purpose and all pervasive institution. He lends hard cash, gram if required and other necessities of life in and out of season. Even a midnight knock at the door brings him to the rescue of the customer. Although exorbitant rates of interest are charged, which will make the beneficiary bonded for the rest of his life or sometimes for generations to come, the poor still go to the money lender because their immediate problem is solved. At any rate, the prospect of improving their lives is beyond their vision. Thus, the money lenders have become an inevitable evil and developed intimate contacts with the villagers. Any number of rules, regulations, acts, controls to bail out the poor from this morass, would not help unless there is a proper substitute for the money lender.

With growing political awareness, education and the impact of science and technology, the weaker sections have realised the futility of their customs and traditions. But they are unable to overcome their indebtedness and cultivate credit-worthiness. Now the time has come for the banks to step into this arena to liberate the poor from the shackles of the unscrupulous money lenders. In this venture, the stiff-necked behaviour of the bureaucratic, rule-

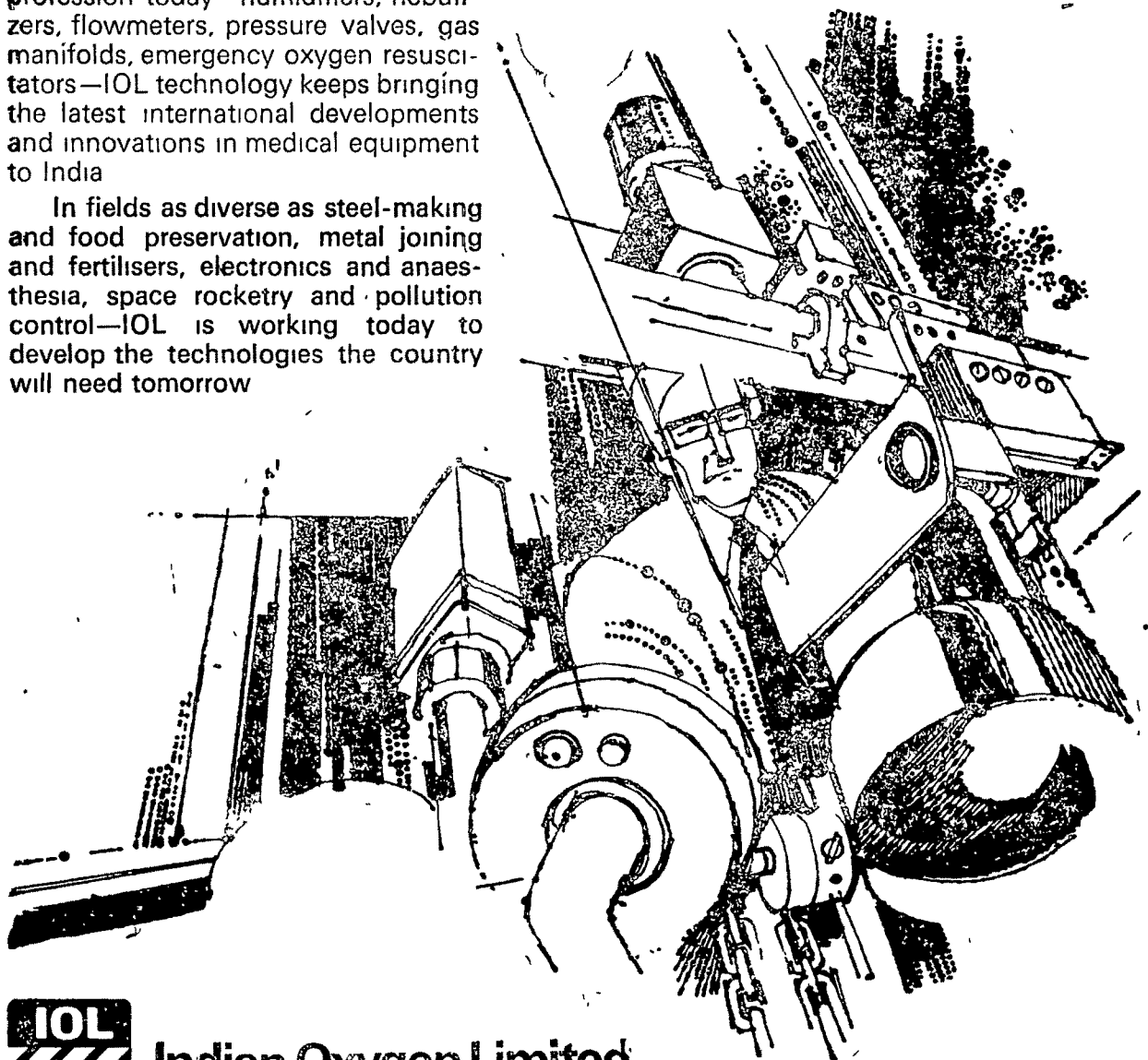
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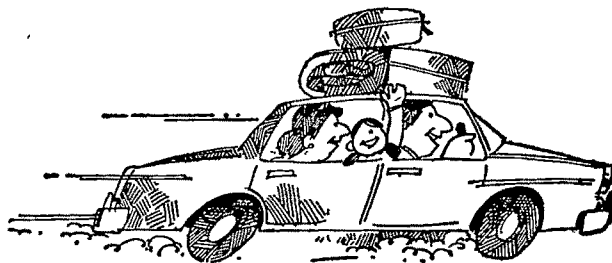


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minded, urban oriented staff does not work. The situation demands a different approach altogether.

To begin with, the wheels of bank credit should move towards our village huts from the cosy rooms of the cities. For a contiguous group of villages, cluster banks, with a service motto and a shift in emphasis with different sets of rules and regulations, have to be established. The staff of these banks has to visit the weaker sections of the villages, strike a proper rapport with them, try to understand them and their problems and suggest solutions through the banks. I venture to call this a system of 'bare foot bankers'.

With sufficient screening and training, the staff for the new scheme should be able to deliver the goods. However, the banking ethos, replete with the conservative out-look adopted by the employees and the management, has to shed the 'thus-far-no-further' attitude towards the underdog. They have to venture into a deeper involvement rather than remaining satisfied the moment a paltry sum is paid to a safe customer once in a while and the handing-over-the-cheque-ceremony-photograph is hung on the wall at a prominent place in the bank premises.

It is noticed that quite a few banks avoid giving loan assistance to the weaker sections under one pretext or the other. When explanation is solicited, bank officials plead that they are not provided with sufficient staff and they are not competent to enter into the financing of special/priority activities. The Reserve Bank of India, therefore while granting permission to open new branches, should impress upon the managements to man them with sufficient staff, so that the special/priority activities are not impaired. Starting new branches for the sake of mere numbers should be discouraged.

While eighty per cent of the population is rural based, seventy per cent of the banks' branches are located in the urban and semi-urban centres leaving only thirty per cent to cater to the millions of the rural population. Now that there is a definite shift in the credit policy to

the rural sector, more and more branches would have to be started in the rural areas.

It would be better to go a step further and nationalise the remaining private commercial banks to put an end to the false feeling in a section of people that their deposits are safer in private bank than in the nationalised banks which, they seem to think, lend indiscriminately to the weaker sections.

Sometimes, in their anxiety to attract deposits, the Agents seemed to give credence to such feelings although there could be no such thing. This not only eliminates misgivings about the attitude of some of the private commercial banks but also strengthens the policy of the government in giving definite directives which are at present observed more in deviation by the private banks. For they are mostly concerned with opening new branches in the 'potential' areas so that they can mobilise savings and raise their level of deposits and follow a credit policy of their choice which is mostly based on no-risk propositions. If necessary, some of the small banks may be amalgamated for administrative convenience and efficient management.

The problem assumes greater importance in view of the implementation of the Sivaraman Committee's recommendations on consumption loans to the rural poor. In 1976, proposals were finalised to distribute about 170 crores through various banking institutions including commercial banks. The amount, being a mere Rs. 250 or less per head, it would be futile to expect the people from remote places to trek their way to urban centres where the banks are situated. Cost-benefit analysis or balance sheet or profit loss account considerations, as it appears, would not allow more branches to be started.

But, the opening of new branches in the rural areas will help not only the weaker sections but the banks also, since over a period of time rural savings will flow down to the counters of the banks. There is need for additional staff, apart from the larger number of branches, for they have to deal with a large number of

small account holders. In this regard, the experience of rural banks makes a worth-while study as these new banks have successfully distributed the loans to the small farmers.

Further, the farmers hesitate to go to town to deposit their savings in the banks because they are suspicious that their savings are being used for the benefit of the townspeople. They would cultivate the habit of savings if branches were located in and around their villages. In addition, as and when they dispose of their produce (vegetables, paddy, jowar etc.), they can conveniently save for the rainy day. Thus the banks would be able to attract sizable savings. Even the small borrowers would be able to repay the loans without any difficulty because they need not waste their day's wages to visit the banks which are far away from their hamlets. Distance sometimes acts as a delaying factor.

Food production is now on the threshold of a major break-through as the farmers are now fully acquainted with the latest techniques of cultivation. In addition, all the inputs — fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, pumpsets, etc., are available to a considerable extent. If the financial assistance is assured to the tillers of the land, they are capable of producing more to meet the challenge of a food shortage. In fact, there is need for greater coordination and liaison between the banks and block administration. At one time the accent was on extension work, now it should be on taking the credit facilities to the door of the cultivator, especially the small and marginal farmers.

Artisans, too, like carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, basket makers, weavers etc., in the rural scene deserve credit facilities because they are also sailing along with the weaker sections. To gain confidence and risk bearing capacity, a few banks may join together and start small and medium industries on a pilot basis in the rural areas in collaboration with the artisans with a bearing on their specialised skills.

It needs to be recalled here that it was the enterprising entrepreneurs

who started the banking institutions and expanded their industrial empires to their advantage with the help of the savings of the small man. Now that there is a definite shift in State policy, the banks should go further and sponsor schemes which could eliminate the crisis of confidence which is deep rooted and all pervading in the minds of the poorer sections. This may be possible when my suggestion of creating cluster banks with bare foot bankers is given a fair trial.

Credit facilities to be made available between urban and rural sectors have to be fixed on the basis of priorities which have to be assiduously observed and erring banks have to be dealt with severely. So long as this is not done, there will be black sheep who try to take shelter under one pretext or the other to avoid banking in the rural areas, because it involves innovation, dynamism and identification with the cause.

Banks are obliged to correct the loans advanced by the sponsoring agencies, particularly the Scheduled Castes Service Corporation, the Backward Classes Service Corporations, etc., from the borrower. In States like Andhra Pradesh, these corporations advance 20% of the loan amount which is known as 'Seed' money since the banks do not give the full loan amount, but only 80%. At the time of collection this arrangement entailed certain difficulties. The borrower would not specify to which account the repayment should be made. In the absence of specific instructions, the banks would naturally credit the amount to the bank account and as soon as the total amount was realised, the account was closed, leaving the sponsoring agency's contribution unpaid.

Further, if a separate account is to be maintained in the name of the sponsoring agency whose rate of interest is higher (6½%), it would lead to proliferation of accounts, which would cause inevitable confusion. The Reserve Bank of India should eliminate these avoidable bottlenecks and increase the efficiency of the Scheduled Banks by giving a directive to them to provide

cent per cent credit facilities as was done in the case of interest rates under the DIR scheme which are substantially lower (4%).

It is distressing to note that there is absolutely no follow-up action after the payment of the loan to the beneficiary. Instead of the sponsoring agencies concentrating on the procedure of scrutiny of forms, payments of loan, etc., it would be better if the agencies diverted their energies and attention to the proper utilisation of the loan amount by the beneficiaries.

In some cases there appears to be a yawning gap between what is being provided in the shape of credit and the utilisation of the same by the beneficiary for the purpose for which the loan is provided. At present there is no organisation responsible for this purpose. In fact the beneficiary requires the help and expert handling of the money so that he could use it judiciously with utmost care and caution.

Loan assistance is another major problem. Usually banks provide loans for specific items like the purchase of a new rickshaw, purchase of a buffalo, pumpsets or an item which could be mortgaged and the value conveniently recovered in case the recovery becomes a problem. It is pertinent to note that the private money lender, unlike the banks, is willing to provide loans for all needs, whether productive or unproductive like money spent on marriages, funerals etc.

Now, the question is whether the commercial banks are able to meet all of the borrower's requirements. In this regard it is suggested that, in order to retain the new borrower and meet all his needs, the banks should allow the borrower to deposit the money in savings to meet his requirements. The loan adjustments may be made over a period of time since the relationship between the borrower and the banks does not come to an end the moment the loan is repaid. It would in all probability continue. As an incentive, the government may allow a slightly higher rate of interest on the deposits from these weaker sections.

The rules followed by the bare foot bankers should allow them to advance loans to the weaker sections, sometimes on the mortgage of gold or silver ornaments at their market value with differential rates of interest (4%) instead of insisting on bank prices on gold which are substantially lower with a higher interest rate (18%). Although the poor who possess gold or silver are a microscopic minority, the experiment deserves a fair trial. This method will have a psychological impact on the entire weaker sections in their attitude towards the money lenders and the bankers.

About the prompt loan repayment to the banks, political parties and voluntary agencies have to take positive steps to impress on the borrowers and explain to them that the bank is like the proverbial goose which lays the golden egg so long as it is fed back; they have to utilise this golden opportunity wisely.

Finally, so long as the mistrust and credibility gap between the new borrower and the banks persists the schemes would not succeed. The onus of convincing the weaker sections about the utility of bank credit and its philosophy lies on the management and the personnel of the banking institutions. At the same time, it is the duty of banks to convince the beneficiary that the government has not made it a policy to rob Paul to pay Peter. In the process, banks may lose some money because of some unscrupulous defaulters, but the amount thus lost need not be grudged.

If the scheme is likely to help the vast majority of the masses, the loss matters little. The weaker sections are 'small fry' who cannot afford to cheat the banks on a large scale. For the poor it is a question of bread. Hence, they are equally careful in the deal. Already a beginning has been made. The new awakening is in evidence everywhere and the efforts have to be made vigorously lest the promises might become futile. The time is opportune, and in the event of failure, posterity would not forgive the present leadership for the lapse.

Communication

Let us remember that the rural problem is not just a scientific or technical one but mainly a socio-political one. Actually, under the prevailing power structure, the small farmers and other weaker sections are at a disadvantage. They do not have easy access to credit and water management, both important inputs affecting farm output. Not only this, when some inputs like fertilisers become scarce, the big farmers can easily get them from block headquarters while the small farmers have to depend on the black market. Even a rise in the price of foodgrains is not going to benefit the small farmers who generally depend on the traditional money lender who gets the output at a very low price as per the previous arrangement ..

Let us therefore have a look at the concentration of assets in rural areas and the special advantage enjoyed by the rural rich in respect of credit and other facilities. Even with the data for 1971-72, over 50 per cent of rural households in India with holdings of less than 2.5 acres, account for less than 10 per cent of all agricultural land. If one talks of holdings below one acre, including the landless with no holdings at all, the percentage of households is about 40. And the total area of land belonging to this 40 per cent accounts for a mere 2 per cent of the total land area. At the other extreme, 10 per cent of rural households with holdings of 10 acres or more account for about 55 per cent of the total land under cultivation.

Let us analyse the data concerning credit use. In spite of a number of agencies primarily meant to help the rural poor, credit worthiness in the rural sector still depends on the amount of land a household has. What is most deplorable is the fact that cooperative credit facilities are given more to those with landholdings than to the landless. This is so more in the case of cooperative credit than in the case of any other form of credit. The picture would be clear from the data presented by the Rural Credit Survey for 1971-72. It reveals that households with assets amounting to less than Rs 20,000 account for nearly 85 per cent of all households. This group has one-third of the total value of land owned, and gets only one-third of the total cooperative credit.

In the next asset group - ranging from Rs 20,000 to Rs 50,000 - 11 per cent of total households account for 31.4 per cent of all the land owned. Interestingly, this group also got 34.6 per cent of all cooperative credit. It must be remembered that the figure for outstanding cooperative credit is also 34.6 per cent. The third asset group, Rs 50,000 and above, clearly the richest group in the rural sector, accounts for a mere 3.9 per cent of all rural households. But, this group accounts for 35.2 per cent of the total value of land owned, in addition to accounting for 31.4 per cent of the total cooperative credit. Again, only about 15 per cent of rural households had assets above Rs 20,000. Yet, they

accounted for nearly 66.6 per cent of the total value of land owned and also accounted for about 66 per cent of the total cooperative credit.

The conclusion is quite clear: without a change in the present power structure in villages, even the technological breakthrough in the farm sector will only widen the present inequalities in this sector. Technological changes and institutional changes should go hand in hand. Expenditure on agriculture as a percentage of total plan expenditure has shown no improvement. It was 23.69 per cent in the first plan, 20.3 per cent in the second plan, 20.5 per cent in the third plan, 23.8 per cent in the three annual plans, 23.3 per cent in the fourth plan and a proposed 20.6 per cent in the fifth plan. The Janata Government has increased this percentage to 40 recently.

The high concentration of land in the hands of a few not only increased income inequalities in the rural sector since, by and large, it is the big farmers who took advantage of the new farm technology, but denied any incentive to the rural poor to work hard and increase farm productivity. Dr. Gunnar Myrdal has repeatedly stressed the fact that in the absence of effective land reforms, all other institutional reforms like community development, agricultural extension and credit cooperation will continue to benefit only the big farmers.

A Task Force set up by the Planning Commission regretted in 1973 the lack of political will for implementing land reforms. It pertinently pointed out, 'In the context of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the rural area of the country, no tangible progress can be expected in the field of land reforms in the absence of the requisite political will. The sad truth is that this crucial factor has been wanting. The lack of political will is amply demonstrated by the large gaps between policy and legislation and between law and its implementation. In no sphere of public activity in our country since independence has the hiatus between precept and practice, between policy pronouncements and actual execution been as great as in the domain of land reforms'.

By the middle of 1973, 3.46 lakh acres had been declared surplus. This increased to 11 lakh acres by the middle of 1976. Of this only 6 lakh acres have been taken over and only 2.2 lakh acres distributed. But, according to one estimate, the surplus area would be of the order of 38 lakh acres. It is also estimated that about 10 lakh acres may be involved in *benami* transactions. The speedy implementation of land reforms will provide a powerful incentive for the rural poor to increase farm productivity. Can one think of rural reconstruction without land reforms?

I. Satya Sundaram.
Machilipatnam

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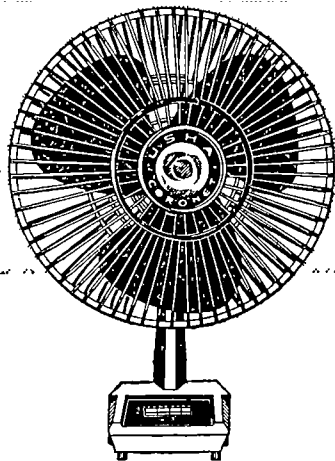


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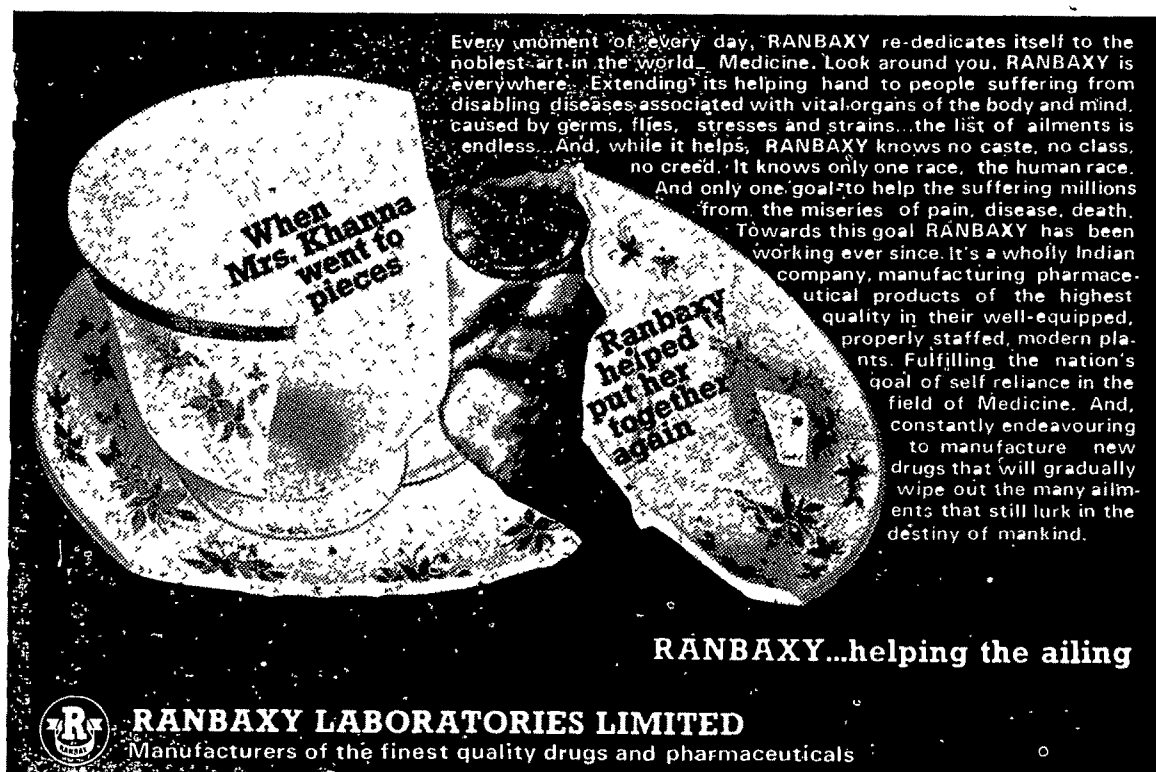


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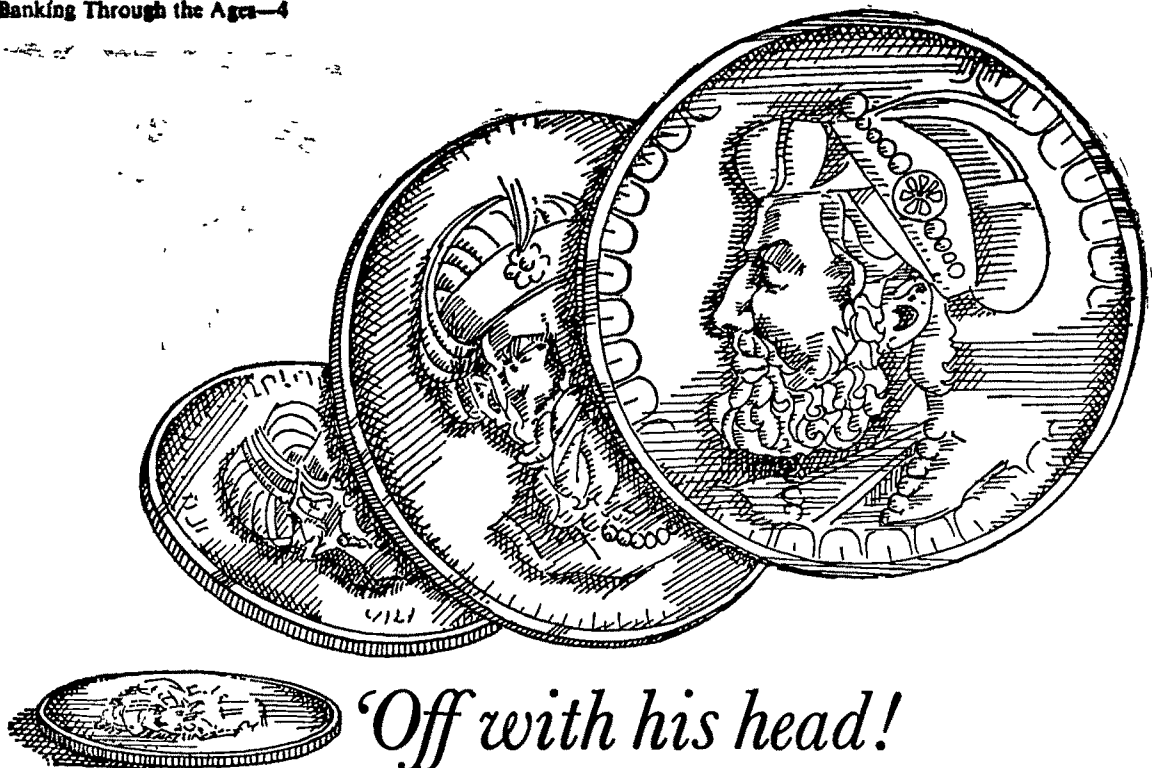


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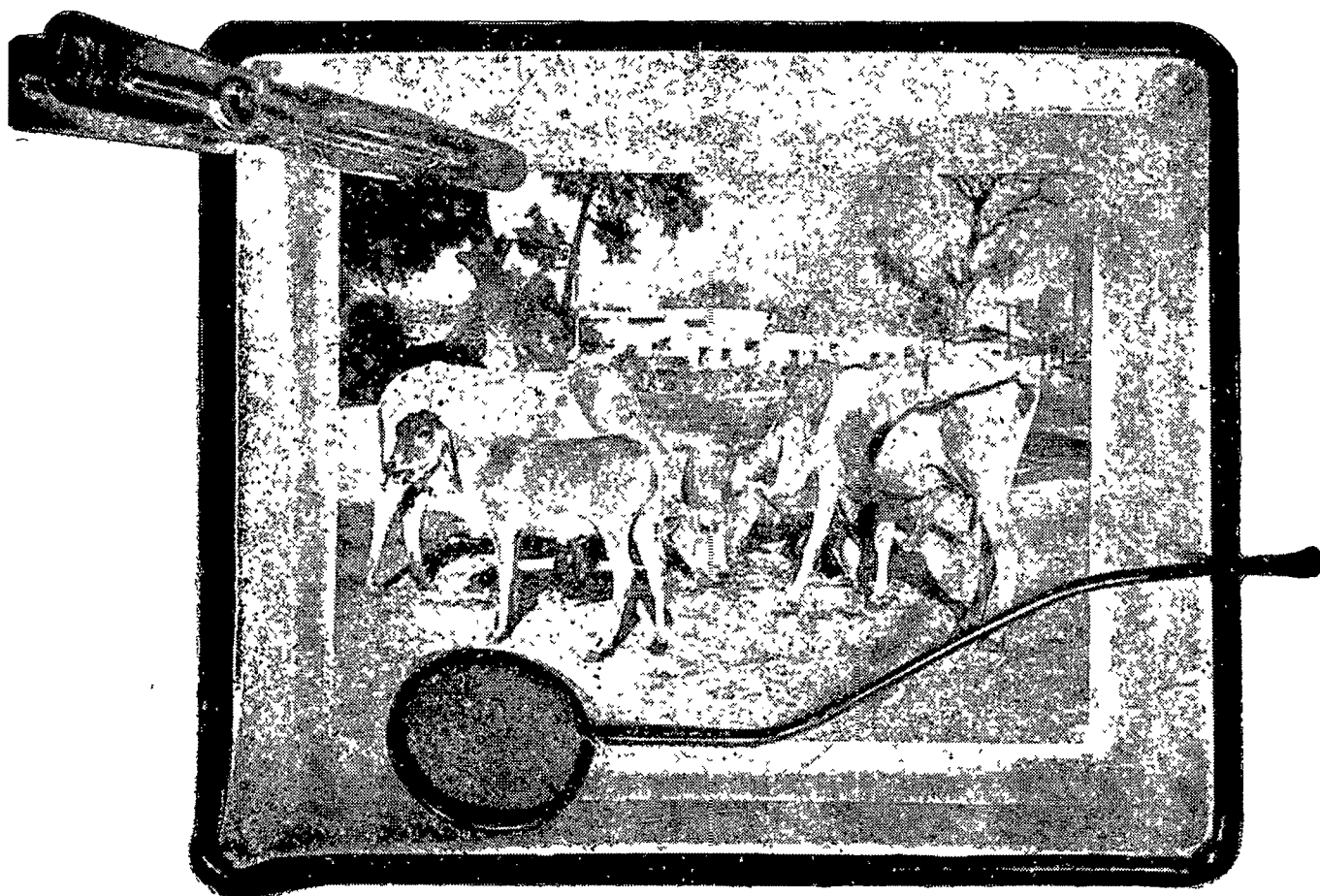
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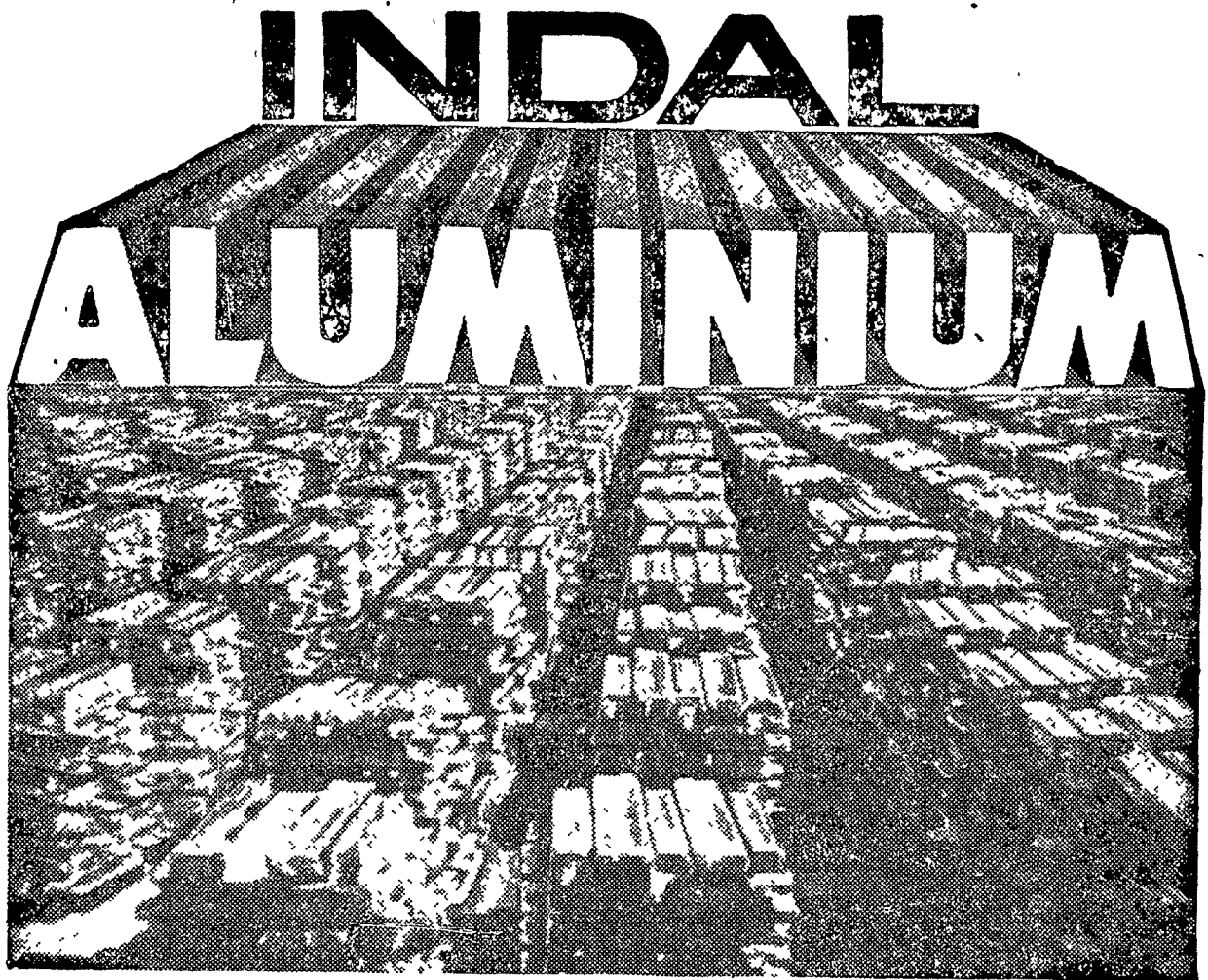
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COVER

Designed by Trilokesh Mukherjee

The problem

IN principle a plan is a comprehensive response to the whole range of development problems that confront us; in practice, each plan focusses attention on some sub-set of these, which is what gives it its distinctive character. The new plan for 1978-83 is basically an employment plan in that for the first time a plan has been constructed with employment rather than output growth as the central theme. Earlier plans had recognised the problem of unemployment but had seldom seen it as the most urgent problem confronting the country. These plans were constructed on the assumption that the tasks of output growth and import substitution were more important and that employment generation could at best be a subsidiary objective. Why has the new plan reversed this emphasis?

To begin with some facts. According to the National Sample Survey (27th round) around 39 lakh persons were chronically unemployed in 1972-73. However, in India, chronic unemployment is a luxury that very few can afford and the vast majority of those who lack work are sporadically unemployed. It is estimated that in 1972-73 this sort of under-employment amounted to 6760 million person-days. What this means is that on a typical day around 186 lakh persons are, to use the NSS description, 'seeking and available for work' but unable to find any. The new plan estimates that by March, 1978, this figure may have gone up to 206

lakh persons. Note that this excludes those who are not 'seeking' but may be 'available' for some type of work, e.g., nursing mothers who may not be seeking full-time work but who could help in some home based activity if a suitable opportunity were available. Nor is this estimate of unemployment a measure of 'surplus' labour which is the difference between the numbers required for sustaining productive activity and the numbers available.

The bulk of the unemployed come from the poorest groups in society who can acquire a claim to income only by work since they own little by way of property. Investments which increase the productivity of assets and raise output will confer few benefits on them. They benefit only in so far as investments increase the demand for labour.

In what way would the picture be different if we had achieved the same growth in national incomes with relatively full employment, say, by suitable regulation on the choice of production techniques?

Some data on the distribution of national income (NDP) in 1975-76 by different categories of income receipts are available

Income from property	Rs 10,300 crores
Income from self-employment	Rs. 26,100 crores
Income from wage labour	Rs 24,500 crores
Total	Rs. 60,900 crores.

Assuming that at least three-quarters of the unemployment prevailing in the 70s would have been eliminated by the provision of work at a wage rate of Rs. 3 per day, the extra income accruing on account of wage labour would have been higher by about Rs 1500 crores with a corresponding reduction in some other categories, most probably in property income. The additional sum would have raised the share of labouring households in national income by about 2.5 per cent. Moreover, the approach to full employment would have led to some increase in wages and hence a further rise in the incomes of such households.

There can be little doubt that an employment-oriented strategy can lead to a substantial reduction in poverty. However, the problem of poverty is larger than the problem of unemployment. According to the estimates contained in the new plan, the number of persons below the poverty line at present is about 294 million. For 162 millions of them, the level of consumption is more than 25% below the poverty line. Even if the entire increment in wage incomes arising from the elimination of unemployment were to accrue to them, the increment in per capita consumption would only be Rs 4 per month, an improvement of about 6 per cent on the poverty line standard of Rs 64 at 1976-77 prices. Clearly, even with full employment many persons would remain below the poverty line unless there

was an increase in wages or some re-distribution of assets or some systematic attempt to subsidise the consumption of the poor.

The generation of incomes in the hands of the poor can take care of consumption needs like food or clothing that are privately produced or purchased. However, there is another component involving needs like education, sanitation, drinking water, health and communication which require community action or public provision. So far much of the public investment in these sectors has benefitted mostly the rich in urban areas, the new plan proposes that such investments should be directed towards rural areas and the urban poor in the form of a Revised Minimum Needs Programme. There is another sense in which this is linked with the objectives of employment generation and poverty removal—the programme involves a large outlay on construction which could be a major source of additional employment and incomes in rural areas in the immediate future.

The implications of an employment-oriented strategy for sectoral priorities are quite clear. Large industry and organised service, which at present employ around 21 million persons, cannot absorb a substantial proportion of the annual increment of about 5 million to the labour force. Most of those who are at present unemployed as

well as those who will enter the labour force over the next five years will have to be absorbed in agriculture and related activities, cottage and village industries, small industries, construction and small scale service activities like road transport. Hence, as a logical consequence of its employment orientation, the new plan proposes that the bulk of the increment in output be obtained from these sectors.

The shift in emphasis in the plan is not necessarily reflected in targetted growth rates which differ very little between the revised fifth plan and the new Draft Plan

Targetted Growth Rates

(percentage per annum)

	Revised Fifth Plan	Draft Plan 1978/83
Agriculture	3.9	4.0
Mining & Manufacturing	7.1	6.9
Electricity	10.1	10.8
Construction	5.9	10.6
Transport	4.8	6.2
Services	4.9	6.0
GDP	4.4	4.7

In fact the only sharp difference is in the construction sector mainly on account of the much larger provision in the new plan for rural infrastructure. However, there are certain important differences in what underlies the targetted growth rates in agriculture and industry. Though the targetted growth

rate in agriculture is the same as in the fifth plan, relative to actual performance it is higher. Moreover, the provisions made for reaching the targets are much higher in the new plan. For instance, the target for additional irrigation potential is 17 million hectares as against the target of 11/13 million hectares in the fifth plan. In fact the yield assumption on which the target is based are quite conservative. In the case of industry, the unchanged growth rate hides one important difference — in the new plan a much larger proportion of the growth in 'industrial' output is expected to come from cottage, village and small industries.

The shift in emphasis in the plan is clearer in the proposed public sector outlays

The emphasis on agriculture is reflected in the sharp increase in the proposed irrigation programme. The benefits from irrigation and similar investments which enhance the productivity of land are generally distributed in proportion to land holdings, the landless benefit to the extent to which additional employment is generated. Thus, though the emphasis on irrigation will create jobs and make available the food that hopefully will be demanded by the poor, it cannot, by itself, solve the problem of poverty or even of unemployment. For this the plan relies largely on subsidiary occupations like dairying, the protection and promotion of village industries and the creation of employment in construction. In fact, the new plan depends crucially on our success in this — for if we fail to generate incomes in the hands of the poor, the 4 per cent growth in agriculture will lead only to a problem of unmanageable surplus while, at the same time, the restrictions on the growth of organised industry will mean shortage of other commodities which, in the plan, are to be produced by the poor.

Public Sector Outlays

(Rs. crores)

	Revised Fifth Plan	Draft Plan 1978/83	Percentage increase
1. Agriculture, irrigation and allied activity	8528	18250	114%
2. Village & Small Industry	510	1410	176%
3. Large Industry & Minerals	6852	8940	30%
4. Energy	9783	20150	106%
5. Transport, Communication	6917	10562	53%
6. Social services ((of which MNP)	6224 (1200)	9355 (3130)	50% (161%)
7. Science & Technology	436	650	49%
Total:	39322	69380	76%

The programme to promote employment and generate incomes in the hands of the poor has to have a regional dimension. Because of our concern with rapid output growth, we have tended to concentrate our efforts at agricultural development in a few areas which could be easily developed. There was another reason for this, if food output grew rapidly in a few areas, a larger proportion could be provided for feeding urban masses and sustaining a programme of urbanisation and industrialisation. Thus, as reported in the fifth plan document, agricultural growth rate exceeded 3 per cent in less than one-third of the districts in India. It follows, therefore, that any strategy which shifts away from this approach can afford to and must ensure that agricultural growth is more widespread.

But, the creation of employment opportunities will not be enough since there are many who are not unemployed but who are poor. Some redistribution of assets or subsidisation of consumption will be required. The new plan talks of all of these, particularly land reforms and the need for a strong public distribution system. But so have earlier plans despite which there has been practically no change in the

N.B. In item 6 figures in brackets refer to outlay on the Minimum Needs Programme part of Social Services outlay. Total outlay on the Minimum Needs Programme, inclusive of outlays on roads and rural electrification is Rs. 4180 crores in the Draft Plan 1978/83.

structure of asset ownership in rural areas or in the incidence of poverty. Perhaps, the rapid creation of employment opportunities in rural areas, quite apart from their direct effect on incomes, will swing the power balance in favour of the poor and make it easier to enforce their rights. The National Adult Education Programme can also play an important role if, instead of concentrating only on literacy, it is used to make the poor more conscious of their rights.

The different bits in the Draft Plan hang together. The emphasis on employment is related to the objective of reducing poverty. Both require some concentration of investments in agriculture and traditional manufacturing activities, which is why the emphasis on rural development and the shift in social service outlays towards rural areas. This change in the pattern of investment and public sector outlays will generate a substantial volume of construction activity in rural areas which will mean an immediate increase in employment. This income will generate a demand for precisely those commodities that can be produced in rural areas, thus justifying the shift in the direction of productive investment.

Moreover, the logic of the strategy, which hinges on the immediate provision of employment and higher incomes, will necessarily require that the outlays be shifted in favour of the poor areas, thus contributing to a reduction in regional inequalities. Further, the additional income and employment could increase the bargaining strength of the poor, thus making it easier to implement re-distributive measures. The National Adult Education Programme can also play a role by helping to mobilise the poor.

But it is not possible to secure these consistencies at a rational level. The need for employment, the requirements of the infra-structure and the potential for development have to fit into one consistent picture at a local level. Hence the emphasis on area planning in the new plan. Instead of piecemeal programmes directed at specific target groups or specific problems, the plan proposes that plans for full employment and integrated rural development be prepared for 3500 out of the 5000 odd development blocks in the country. If these plans are to be effectively prepared and implemented, some degree of decentralisation will be necessary.

But, there are many uncertainties about the modalities of such decentralisation. What will be the role of panchayat raj institutions, producer cooperatives, the lower echelons of the State bureaucracy, voluntary agencies? What will be the form of local participation and control particularly for under-privileged groups? How will block plans be funded? How will the normal requirements of accountability be enforced? The plan does not provide an answer to these and other questions. Yet, the answer will have to be found if we are to implement the crucial element in the plan — the

immediate generation of employment through block level plans.

One feature of the plan deserves some emphasis: the fact that it necessarily implies a degree of inward orientation in development strategy. A crucial link in the plan strategy is the protection and promotion of traditional industry and other employment intensive manufacturing activity. This will necessarily require controls, not merely on large scale industries, but also on imports of commodities and technology in these areas. Moreover, except in a few sectors like handicrafts, the bulk of activity in the protected areas will be for domestic use. In this sense the new development strategy is inward looking and cannot be implemented as an outward looking, export-oriented, comparative advantage based strategy. At the same time, the strategy requires that in sectors in which the protection of employment is not critical, we should conserve resources and undertake only those investments that pass the test of comparative advantage. The new plan recognises both these elements and proposes in effect that the benefits of protection should accrue largely to employment intensive sectors rather than to large industry.

What are the risks that we run with the new strategy? The first is the possibility that by generating a substantial volume of additional employment we will create a demand for food and other consumer goods before the capability to produce more of them is effective. But this is a risk that is substantially covered by the stocks of foodgrains that have been built up.

The second risk is the possibility of the foreign exchange gap opening up because our investment programmes will generate a demand for industrial commodities which cannot be met from increased domestic production because of the restraint on investment in large industries. This risk is covered by our foreign exchange reserves, in fact some widening of the foreign exchange gap is necessary if we are to cash our reserves and use the proceeds to enhance public investment.

The third risk is the possibility of a savings gap if the increased consumption of the poor is secured at the expense of savings, particularly public savings, rather than by restraining the consumption of the rich. There is no sure insurance against this risk, however, in agriculture, any genuine improvement in the incomes of labourers and small farmers will by and large be at the expense of large farmers, in industry, a reduction in the protection enjoyed by large industries could help to ensure to some extent that the shift is from the rich and the poor in the private sector and does not impinge on public savings. Yet, this risk of a shortfall in savings is a very real one and the principal task of the Central and State Governments will be to test every measure they institute in terms of its impact on income distribution and savings.

NITIN DESAI

New deal for the poor?

A. VAIDYANATHAN

THE Planning Commission deserves to be commended for producing the draft five-year plan for 1978-83 within a remarkably short span of time. This achievement is the more commendable because the draft had to be prepared in the midst of intense controversies within the ruling party on basic issues relating to the directions and strategy of development—controversies which at times cast a long shadow on the very nature and role of planning itself. Though the issues under debate are far from being resolved, the draft does provide a fresh look at the country's problems and outlines a strategy which, in several respects,

makes a significant departure from that of previous plans.

The draft declares that the primary object of the plan is to remove unemployment and significant underemployment, to appreciably increase the living standards of the poorest segments of the population and to ensure that these groups will have, within a period of 10 years, certain minimum standards of education, water supply, health and the basic amenities. This is not a new idea. It was advocated forcefully as far back as 1962 and repeated, albeit in a much diluted form, by subsequent plan documents. However, this is the first time that a plan recognises them to be the overriding objectives of national development policy

*I am grateful to IS Gulati and T N Krishnan for going through an earlier draft.

Earlier plans saw a rapid acceleration on the overall rate of growth and sustaining it at a high level, as the primary means of solving problems of mass poverty and unemployment, redistributive measures were accorded a distinctly secondary place. The present draft reserves the emphasis recognising the difficulties experienced in stepping up the growth rate, the planners now postulate a considerably more modest growth target than in the past.

Thus, the draft visualises aggregate real output to grow by about 4.7 per cent a year in the next quinquennium with a cautious hope, subject to several qualifications, of raising it to 5.5 per cent a year subsequently. This compares with the target of 5.5 to 6.2 percent annual growth for the medium term, and well over 6 per cent for the longer term, proposed in earlier plans. It is also noteworthy that the planners have not allowed themselves to be stampeded by the strong political pressures from the Janata Party for a high growth target: the party's economic policy resolution, it may be recalled, spoke of a 7 per cent annual growth as the minimum desirable goal.

The draft outlines a number of measures which, it hopes, will help remove (or at any rate make substantial progress towards removing) mass poverty and unemployment even in the context of a rather modest growth of the economy. Perhaps the most important is a shift in the allocation of public investments in favour of rural development and programmes specifically meant for the benefit of the poorer classes and regions. Total public investment during 1978-83 is sought to be more than double the level envisaged in the fifth plan period; its share in total investment, however, seems to have been reduced substantially. The proportion of public sector outlay allocated to rural development programmes is to be increased from 37.5 per cent in the revised fifth plan, to 43 per cent in 1978-83.

The proportion allocated for programmes meant to provide employment and amenities to the poor

have been increased even more sharply: The proposed outlays on special programmes for rural development and for village and small scale industries are about thrice the level in the revised fifth plan; the allocations for the minimum needs programme have been increased over five fold.

The draft envisages the implementation of integrated rural development projects aimed at creating, in the next 5 years, full employment in 1600 blocks in the selection of which those with 20 per cent or more scheduled castes/tribes population are to be given first priority. In the field of industry, the draft argues for a 'review, and if possible an expansion, of the list of industries reserved for the small scale cottage sector'. This shift in priorities, together with the existence of excess capacity in many segments of organised industry, the rather modest increase in the overall growth rate, and the substantial change in the composition of investment, has also meant a significant reduction in the proportion of resources allocated to mining and manufacturing as a whole, and especially to large scale industry in the public sector.

As a result of these shifts in investment priorities and policy, it is claimed that the economy can look forward to an appreciable reduction in the employment gap. The draft estimates that the level of employment in 1983-84 will be 49 million person years more than in 1977-78 compared to a projected increase of 24 million person years in the labour force due to population growth. The balance (25 million person years) will go to reduce the back-log of unemployment and under employment from an estimated 41 million person years in 1977-78 to 15-16 million person years by 1983-84. The creation of additional employment on this scale is the king-pin of the new strategy to alleviate mass poverty.

Although the draft devotes a whole chapter to 'Distributive Justice', much of it is a repetition and reiteration of such time-worn prescriptions as land reforms, regulation of large business houses,

special schemes to help backward regions and backward classes. In some respects it seems even to take a step or two backward. For instance, reference is made to the adverse effect of tardy implementation of the urban land ceilings on construction activity. The Commission has little to say on how the existing ceiling laws — which incidentally are confined to vacant land and are far less radical in its intent and scope than the title suggests — might be implemented more effectively. The reader gets the impression that perhaps the planners consider the ceilings to be unwise!

Nevertheless, the plan does make a number of new suggestions to better serve the interests of the relatively vulnerable segments of the population. Notable among these are: a substantial increase in the proportion of institutional credit flowing to small farmers and small enterprises; provision of consumption credit and debt relief to the poorest classes, improvement in the coverage of the public distribution system in order to make it reach the rural poor and expansion of its scope to include a wider range of essential commodities, measures to give the poor a greater voice in the formulation and implementation of programmes for their benefit, and measures to facilitate speedier implementation of land reforms.

The draft, however, does not spell out the operational steps by which these suggestions are to be made effective. The important exception is land reforms, for which the plan recommends the creation of village committees, with adequate representation for potential beneficiaries, vested with legal powers to correct land records, locate surpluses and effect redistribution of such surplus subject to only a single appeal. What is 'adequate representation for potential beneficiaries' is left vague, the Commission could have gone further and suggested majority representation for beneficiaries. But even if the watered down version was seriously implemented, there would be a locus for the landless and the tenants, to exert effective pressure for the

better implementation of land reforms. This is also true of the suggestion for inclusion of representatives of the beneficiaries in non-official committees to oversee the implementation of anti-poverty programmes.

On the face of it, all this would seem to add up to an impressive evidence of seriousness of purpose and a fresh bold approach to the country's fundamental socio-economic problems. But a critical reader of the document is bound to be assailed by several doubts about the technical details of the projections, about the extent to which 'the policy frame' meshes in with the declared objectives and priorities and, above all, about the credibility of the government's political commitment and ability to carry through the policies. It is not possible within the compass of a short article to attempt a comprehensive critique, we shall, out of necessity, focus only on a few selected questions.

First, let us take the projection of growth. Though the present draft is more modest than its predecessors, there is reason to question whether even the trimmed down targets are realisable. The targetted growth of agriculture (about 4 per cent per annum) is about twice as high as has in fact been realised in the decade of the so called 'Green Revolution'. The targets would have carried greater conviction if the draft had critically evaluated the reasons for the sluggishness of growth in the past decade despite an accelerated absorption of practically all inputs (except land) and suggested concrete measures to remedy the observed deficiencies in concept or implementation. No such analysis is even attempted, nor are any significant new departures in strategy envisaged.

The draft, like the fourth and the fifth plans, seems to pin its hopes of a faster growth of agricultural production essentially on the extension and improvement of irrigation facilities, spread of HYVs and more intensive use of fertiliser. There is mention of the need to modernise and improve existing irrigation systems, (through command area

development, consolidation, etc.) but the difficult institutional problems to be solved in order to make these ideas work are hardly mentioned, much less faced.

The targets for large scale industry depend heavily on the improved utilisation of existing capacity and capacities which are in the process of construction. One would have expected some discussion of the reasons for the persistent, large under-utilisation of capacity in such key sectors as metals, fertilisers, chemicals and machinery. While the lack of demand may be the major factor in some industries (like engineering and machinery, they are clearly not so in the case of several others (especially metals and fertilisers) There is hardly any analysis of the operational problems of such industries or of the measures to overcome them.

The draft as well as the new Industrial Policy statement declare the government's intention to encourage the rapid growth of small scale and cottage industry through, among other things, a policy of reservation of additional output in a wide range of consumer and light industry to this sector. Indeed, the projections imply a dramatic change in the ratio of incremental industrial output and employment in favour of the small sector. But the links between policy and projections will have to be spelt out far more fully, and one must have greater evidence of the government's ability to implement an extended policy of reservation in the face of predictable pressures from organised industry and organised labour in the affected sectors before the projections can be taken seriously. The recent decision to permit an expansion of the mill sector, on the grounds of utilising the existing capacity of the textile machine industry, hardly inspires confidence that the declared policy will in fact be implemented.

One more general point: the sectoral output targets are said to have been worked out taking into account the technical inter-relations among various sectors and also explicitly postulates that, as a result of the programmes and policies proposed, the consumption level of

the poorer classes will increase at a relatively faster rate than that of the rich, bringing the former, within a decade, to at least 75 per cent of the desired minimum standard. However, it is not at all clear whether the output projections are integrated and consistent with those relating to the growth of employment, the level and composition of investment, and the policies for resource mobilisation. In any event, the projections of employment and the public sector do raise several doubts

In many respects, the discussion of the nature and dimensions of the employment problem in the draft is clearly superior to that of previous plans. There is greater conceptual clarity, measurements are more refined and the document provides a wealth of data. On the face of it, a systematic effort also seems to have been made to quantify the additional employment potential of the programme. Unfortunately, the draft does not spell out the basis of the projections

On the basis of the trend growth rate in various sectors between 1961 and 1976, and the rate of employment growth relative to output for each sector implied in the projections for 1978-83, it would seem that in the past decade and a half the labour absorption in the economy (expressed in standard person years) should have grown considerably faster than the increase in the labour force (also expressed in the standard units). This does not square with evidence (reduction in participation rates, rising open unemployment and declining real wages) from the NSS and other sources pointing to a deterioration in the employment situation.

It may be said that this is a wrong way to test the projections because the latter incorporate the effects of deliberate policies to increase the overall employment intensity of the plan. However, reading the relevant chapter of the plan carefully one cannot find any clear relationship established between specific policies proposed in the plan and the expected increase in employment especially in agriculture and 'other activities' which

account for over 80 per cent of the estimated increase in total employment.

In the case of agriculture, there are references to the effects of more intensive cultivation of land for raising crop output, to the beneficial effects of land reform in stimulating agricultural employment and to the need for regulating the pace of mechanisation. To the extent the latter two elements of policy are important pre-conditions for increased labour absorption in agriculture on the projected scale, the estimates are open to question. Land reforms apart, policies on mechanisation are so vague and qualified that one wonders whether any serious effort will at all be made to discourage its spread. This is a matter of great importance because in some areas where considerable intensification of agriculture has taken place (e.g., in Ferozepur, Muzafarnagar and Coimbatore) the use of human labour has not kept pace with output growth, and has in fact declined in at least one of them. It so happens that in all these areas the pace of mechanisation has also been especially rapid.

As for 'other Sectors' a residual which includes a variety of activities ranging from construction to domestic service, the State has hardly any policy instrument by which the employment intensity can be manipulated. The planners seem to place much hope on the creation of massive employment in construction and on the various employment-oriented rural development schemes. The relative shift in plan-allocation in favour of construction can indeed increase the volume of construction activities at a faster rate than total investments, it could also increase the share of relatively labour intensive types of construction in the total. Even with all this, it is difficult to see how a sector which absorbs barely 1 per cent of the total employment, and 6-7 per cent of the non-agricultural employment (excluding mining and industry), could really be a major source of the additional employment.

Finally, both in the case of agriculture and 'other sectors', there is

but limited scope for policies to ensure, in the near term, that the additional employment will be created in regions where the incidence of poverty and un-employment are the greatest. This can be achieved only over a long period, provided the policies succeed in stimulating faster growth in the backward areas.

The financial projections of the draft plan raise even more serious doubts. It is regrettable that the draft continues the tradition of not explaining the basis for the estimates of public sector savings, thereby making informed criticism of the estimates difficult. Even so, a number of questions can be raised. First, it is intriguing that despite the expectation of a continued rapid growth in exports (including invisibles), the draft projects gross aid at roughly the same levels as in recent years (around \$ 2 billion a year). This is largely because of the projected doubling of import requirements. It is difficult to see the basis for such a large increase in import requirements especially in view of the rather modest overall growth target, the shift in investment priorities and the existence of large unutilised capacities in domestic industries which are clearly substitutes for imports.

Second, there has always been a calculated ambiguity in our plans on the question of whether estimates of financial resources are at constant or current prices. This ambiguity persists.

Third, the assumption underlying the estimates of balance from current revenues at existing levels of taxation are not clear. But if the draft plan follows the practice of its predecessors in assuming minimal increases in non-plan, non-development expenditures, the estimates are suspect.

Fourth, the draft expects a sharp increase in the proportion of public sector resources mobilised in the form of market borrowing (from about a sixth in the revised fifth plan to 23 per cent in the next plan). Whether this implies a much faster rise in bank deposits or diversion of

a significantly larger proportion of increase in deposits to the public sector, the relative dependence on taxation is already being reduced. Is all this consistent with the assumptions (a) that private savings will increase but marginally and (b) that a larger proportion of aggregate investment will take place in the private sector?

Finally, in so far as projections of the above elements are optimistic, the additional resource mobilisation required to finance the plan will be considerably more than the draft suggests. The draft may not only understate the difficulties of mobilising additional resource even on the scale visualised, but its concrete suggestions in this regard are no more than a repetition of measures advocated in all previous plans and their fate is only too well known. It is also rather disingenuous to argue that the order of mobilisation is manageable because an even larger amount has been mobilised in the first 4 years of the fifth plan. If allowance were made, as it should, for the high rates of inflation during the latter period, the magnitude of resource mobilisation in real terms can be shown to be considerably smaller than the draft suggests.

Now does the draft address itself to the implication of the revised priorities for the allocation of the aggregate public sector plan outlay between the Centre and the States. Given the greatly increased emphasis on agriculture, rural development, small scale and village industries, all of which come within the sphere of the States, it follows that the allocation of total plan outlay as between the Centre and the States should shift considerably in favour of the latter. On a rough calculation and assuming that the States' share in the total allocation for each sector remains as in the fifth plan, about 56 per cent of the public sector outlay in 1978-83 will be under State plans, compared to less than 50 per cent in the earlier plan. The increase in the States' share should be even larger if the government is serious about decentralisation. Moreover, if the anti-poverty programmes are to mean anything, at all in practice, there should be a

mechanism to ensure that the allocation for basic needs and a substantial part of the funds for rural development works do go to the backward regions.

All this cannot be done under the existing arrangements which first determine the aggregate quantum of central assistance needed to finance the State plans as a whole, and then allocates the aggregate among States according to an agreed formula, which, though on the surface progressive, ends up allocating larger per capita assistance to relatively high-income States. One could think of revising the formula further by giving greater weightage to the relative backwardness of a State in the allocation of total central assistance. But this is unlikely to be achieved because of the various pressures from States, particularly high income States. Also, as the draft rightly recognises, the poorer States, like backward regions, are simply not powerful enough to exert effective pressure to ensure that their interests are safeguarded.

Alternatively, the Centre could specifically identify the programmes meant for the poor, earmark a substantial central assistance for such programmes and decide their allocation between States purely on an objective criteria of backwardness. The balance of the central assistance could be distributed in accordance with existing procedures. Since this will involve a substantial erosion in the share of the more advanced States in central assistance, and since it is far from clear that the States generally share the Planning Commission's view on priorities, it will take an extraordinary amount of persuasive ability and firmness on the part of the Centre to make the actual allocation of resources conform to the revised priorities. This raises such major issues that one would have expected the draft at least to pose them. Unfortunately, the planners have chosen to slur over the problem altogether by transmitting it to another special committee¹.

usual lip service to the need for decentralised planning with popular participation but hardly any new ideas or how to achieve it. The emphasis, as in earlier plans, is on viewing the problem basically from the technocratic, administrative view-point. Hence the stress on streamlining administration, preparation of integrated block development plans by qualified experts, and avoiding duplication of effort by a multiplicity of agencies. Even here, they have hardly anything to say on why all these solutions, which have been talked about for so long and which have been tried out here and there, did not work. The more fundamental, and difficult, problems of revitalising local government, and making them responsible agencies for the mobilisation and use of resources in an equitable manner, are not faced at all. There is, however, a welcome stress on giving a much bigger role to voluntary agencies in local planning and implementation, and on involving the poor in the programmes. One hopes that these suggestions at least will be given a serious trial.

It would seem, therefore, that the draft plan, after all, has really not made much of a fundamental departure from tradition as might seem. For, like all previous plans, the draft is far more strident and articulate in promising a New Deal for the poor, than in demonstrating a willingness to face up to the hard political decisions needed to redeem the commitment. In fact, the policy implications are either slurred over or underplayed to the point of evading them. Altogether, the document fails to carry conviction that the party in power has either the will or the capability to take the measures necessary to redeem the promises.

It would be erroneous to attribute the lack of political credibility of the plan to the lack of cohesion within the ruling party or the extremely fluid overall political situation. The problem is much deeper. For, any serious attempt to give operational content to the New Deal necessarily means hurting, in greater or lesser degree, the interests of the ruling classes comprising the

larger peasants, the private entrepreneurs, the organised urban labour and other well-to-do segments. And they seem to be in no mood to face this simple fact.

It was hoped that the expansion of the public sector could be used to bring about a significant shift in the distribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor, without hurting the rich. But experience so far has belied this expectation. In point of fact, the growth and proliferation of the State's role in the economy has largely benefitted the well-to-do classes. What is worse, it has deteriorated into a system of patronage and spoils without parallel. Those in power have used it not only to advance their narrow economic interests and strengthen their political base, but to effectively prevent the small peasantry, landless workers, artisans and the unorganised segments of urban labour from getting organised into an effective political force. This has been done through a combination of slogans designed to feed the hopes of the poor, token programmes ostensibly meant for their benefit, buying off potential 'trouble-makers' who make bold to organise the poor and, if the situation threatens to get out of control, by using force.

There is nothing to suggest that the picture has changed materially. Changes of parties and personalities in power, including the massive change which took place in 1977, have only altered the relative power of groups within the well-to-do classes, they have not resulted in giving the poor a more effective voice in the shaping of policy or its implementation. It is perhaps no accident that the draft plan is eloquent about removing poverty and employment but fails to come to grips with its policy consequences. One cannot blame this on the planners who after all do not function in a political vacuum. In fact the draft, for all its faults, has done a service in posing the central dilemmas of development policy more sharply than before, and in offering at least some concrete measures to help the poor.

Change in approach

M Y GHORPADE

A major weakness of our planning has been the neglect of micro-analysis at the grass-root level. Insufficient and inaccurate data is largely due to the inadequacy of painstaking field research. Lack of detailed and concrete analysis of social and economic microcosms continue to plague the planning process. This has resulted in broad aggregates and generalisations blurring the human factor, and mystifying the effect of our plans on the poorest man, about whom we should be primarily concerned in a country like India.

It is not only the size of the plan but its content that counts. This realisation came into sharper focus at the beginning of the fifth plan. It was rightly felt that the fabric of development should be such as to benefit, in adequate measure, the people below the poverty line who constitute nearly half our population. Obviously, our plans and development should be designed to benefit the poorest of the poor more directly, in order to reduce disparities and build a healthier basis of existence. This is at the core of the concept of growth with

social justice Does the sixth plan put more teeth into this approach is the question before us.

The draft sixth plan or five year plan perspective for 1978-83 states that 'as a result of development so far, the savings capability of the economy has increased. An adequate stock of technological skill is available. A strong and diversified industrial and infrastructure base has been built up and, in parts of the country, agriculture is also highly advanced. The task now is to utilise these human material and financial resources for a new pattern of growth in furtherance of the goals of employment and redistributive justice'. How new will be this pattern, how clearly has it been spelt out and how effective will be its implementation?

The average growth rate in the next five years is estimated at 4.7 per cent. It is to be stepped up to 5.5 per cent in the five year period 1983-88. It is stated that though the fourth plan and draft fifth plan had postulated a growth rate of 5.5 per cent, the actual rate of growth was about 3.5 per cent. The postulation of a fairly high growth rate was intended to make us stretch and strain to scale the high peaks of development, even though the actual performance might fall short of the highest point. But a relatively modest target of growth need not, and does not, automatically result in maximising our effort. What is actually achieved depends on the interaction of a number of factors in the field within a given framework. The draft plan document however points out that a number of developing countries have been recording real rates of growth of the order of 5 to 8 per cent.

The population below the poverty line is given as 290 million, of which 160 million fall below 75 per cent of the poverty line. The recommended nutritional requirement has been put at 2400 calories and 2000 calories per person, per day, for rural and urban areas respectively. In terms of rupees, the poverty line is taken as the mid-point of the expenditure at which the calorie needs are satisfied. This point is said to be Rs. 71 and

Rs 61 per month, per person, for rural and urban areas respectively at 1976-77 prices. It may be recalled that the poverty line was once calculated at a monthly income of Rs 20 per head. It was later raised to a monthly income of Rs. 40 and now it ranges from Rs. 61 to 71, adjustable according to the price level. The draft plan claims to have made demand estimates for the 'poor and non-poor' sections of the population in such a manner that consumption of households below the poverty line is increased in five years to 75 per cent of the consumption required to cross the poverty line.

In other words, three-fourths of the deficiency of consumption of the poor households is assumed to be eliminated by 1982-83. It is however stated that 'since total consumption is determined by macro economic exercise, the aggregate consumption of the non-poor is correspondingly reduced. These assumptions are critical'. This is so because the production and import targets for essential consumption depend upon the 'additional demand that may be created by the redistribution of purchasing power as a result of rural development, area planning, minimum needs and small industry programmes'. It is not clear how exactly this will work or be made to work.

The consumption estimates fed into the basic 89 sector input-output model are supposed to be derived from a mixed demand model computed separately for rural and urban areas. It is stated that this model will be published in the technical papers. The assumptions and the operational strategy need to be examined critically, and in depth, and quantified in detail before we can say how realistic or otherwise they are.

Essentially, employment is the great antidote to poverty and is the surest way of putting purchasing power in the hands of the poor. In this process the poorest among the poor deserve greater attention. Let us see what postulates and assumptions the plan makes regarding reducing unemployment. It claims that 'an attempt has been made to

make radical change in the pattern of investment and to initiate a technology policy which would stimulate labour absorption at a satisfactory rate. However, the plan document gives the impression that the pattern of investment has not altered radically and is basically a continuation of past trends.

The broad strategy outlined in the draft plan is more or less the same as in the fifth plan with regard to the emphasis on agriculture, irrigation, power and minimum needs. As regards technology policy, it is not clear how long it will take, and what exactly will be its impact in different fields of production. The gap between idea and implementation needs to be quantified in detail so that a time-bound operational strategy emerges. Until then, the use of appropriate technology will remain only a desirable but distant goal.

At present, we do not even have proper employment co-efficients of different types of production to make choices based upon certain clear cut norms. These will have to be built up, and a whole package of policy decisions and administrative arrangements made to see that the appropriate, employment-oriented modes of production are not only protected but positively grown, to maximise employment. The last year of the fifth plan could have been profitably used for a determined effort in this direction. One cannot see what exactly has been gained by making it the first year of the next five year plan which is supposed to roll on. In any case, the five year plans of States cannot be finalised before the Seventh Finance Commission gives its award in October.

To say that unemployment will be abolished in the next ten years sounds good. But saying is not the same as doing. How exactly this will be achieved is the question. The draft plan document states that the work force has increased from 227 million in 1971 to 261 million in 1978 and will go up to 290 million in 1983. The persons working in the organised sector were 20.2 million in 1971, 24.8 million in 1978 and are expected to be 27.5 million

in 1983. The work force in the unorganised sector is obtained by subtracting recorded employment in the organised sectors from the total work force. Of this, the work force in agriculture is estimated to have gone up from 166 million in 1971 to 192 million in 1978 and is expected to be 214 million in 1983.

The work force in other activities of the unorganised sector is estimated to have increased from 39 million in 1971 to 44 million in 1978 and is expected to be 48 million in 1983. Unemployment is estimated to have gone up from 17 million in 1971 to 20 million in 1978 and is expected to be 23 million in 1983. The figures of rural employment for 1971, 1978 and 1983 are 14, 16 and 18 millions respectively. The corresponding figures for urban unemployment are 3, 4 and 5 millions respectively. Chronic unemployment in 1971, 1978 and 1983 is put at 3.6, 4.4 and 5.0 millions respectively, which is the difference between total labour force and total work force in those years.

The plan concludes that the labour force is increasing by 2 per cent per year and, therefore, employment must increase by 3 per cent per annum, if new entrants are to be employed and the present backlog of unemployment, viz., 8% of the labour force is to be absorbed in a ten year period. The addition to the labour force will be nearly 6 million per year in the next five years. Broadly speaking, it is being said that about 10 million jobs per year are needed for the next ten years. However, it is emphasized that the organised sector absorbs only 11% of the annual increase in labour force.

If the growth rate of industrial production continues to be 5% as at present, the organised sector will absorb only about 2.7 million of the 29 million additional workers in the next five years. 'Of the rest, about 21 million will stay on in agriculture, and about 5 million will take to some partial employment in the informal sectors and some half a million or so will become chronically unemployed. As pointed out by the draft plan 'the sobering fact is that even if the rate of industrial growth

increases to 7% the extra absorption in the whole organised sector will be only 0.26 million so that the overall profile of the remaining labour force will remain unaffected'.

The draft plan also states that 'though a drastic shift in the distribution of the work force from agriculture is normal and desirable, it is not likely to materialise in India in the future'. The percentage of the work force engaged in agriculture has remained remarkably constant at 73% over a number of years from 1921.

All this clearly shows that there is not going to be any big change in our plan strategy or performance in the next 5 years. The Planning Commission has however attempted to show an increased growth rate in employment by trying to calculate approximate employment in adjusted standard person-years 'of 9 months per year'. In this way, it calculates total employment to go up from 167 million in 1977-78 to 216 million in 1982-83, i.e., by 49 million or nearly 10 million per year.

The basis of this calculation is nowhere given. The plan document admits that 'these figures cannot be compared to the labour force projections without converting the labour force also into standard person-years on some assumptions'. The labour force of 265 and 295 millions in 1978 and 1983 is adjusted in standard person years to 208 and 232 millions respectively. And then an attempt is made to show that the employment gap in standard person years is reduced from 41 millions in 1977-78 to 15 millions in 1982-83. Here also the methodology and basis of conversion of work force to person-years is not given. The employment gap as earlier estimated is 20 million and 23 million person-years in 1977-78 and 1982-83 respectively. How can there be a difference of 21 millions in the two estimates of person-years unemployment in 1977-78?

Moreover, is it not obvious that the rate of increase in employment cannot be very different from previous years, when the whole approach to plan priorities and

implementation has not altered in any radical manner? Can changing the basis of presentation change facts? The device of the standard person-year is not at all clear and may make the confusion more confounded. Unless the Planning Commission clearly explains the basis, we would not be able to say anything about the rate and rationale of the anticipated increase in employment in the next five years, compared to the previous years. Continuity and comparability ought to be essential ingredients of the planning process.

How exactly does the draft plan propose to step up employment and purchasing power in the rural areas? The quickest way of doing this is to have an employment guarantee scheme in the rural areas, so that every person who is willing to do hard physical labour for a living wage is given work in rural development programmes such as minor, medium and major irrigation, soil conservation, rural communications, afforestation and other infrastructure activities.

A contingency plan of rural works should be kept ready, to be switched on at short notice to the extent needed, to ensure that some suitable manual labour is made available to those who are badly in need of it. The drought experience should convince anybody of the need for such a programme and commitment. This would be completely in line with the object of strengthening rural developmental infrastructure and could be paid for partly in cash and partly in reasonably priced foodgrains. This is not an unemployment dole, but payment for hard and high priority work. If we are serious about rural employment, why is this not accepted as a national policy and made the starting point of rural development?

A supplemental rural works programme to assure work at a modest living wage will not need more than about Rs 20 to 40 per annum, per head of rural population below the poverty line. This has been our experience in Karnataka. This would be a rural development programme with high employment generation, at a level where the

poorest live. It would be the best guarantee against starvation. Educated, unemployed youth in the rural areas could be absorbed to the extent possible in rural development itself. Composite skills relevant to the local area could be imparted to them.

Karnataka launched a scheme last year to employ rural youth on the basis of a monthly stipend and involve them in rural development locally, preference being given to unemployed persons from families which are below the poverty line and which do not have anybody working in the organised sector. In this way, the most needy amongst the rural, educated poor can earn an honourable living and participate in the development of the area to which they belong. New modes of training and service values will have to be developed. The usefulness of their work will have to be judged by the rural poor themselves. That will have to be the ultimate test of all rural development programmes.

If we are really serious about improving the consumption of the poor, a massive child nutrition programme should be launched throughout the country. It is here that a breakthrough needs to be achieved. This is the weakest link which needs to be strengthened to ensure that at least the children of the poor do not suffer from severe malnutrition. In Karnataka, such a policy was fully spelt out last year. On the basis of catering to at least 40 per cent of the children below the poverty line during the sixth plan, the total number of pre-school and school going children getting some nutrition diet or mid-day meal was to increase from about 23 lakhs to 53 lakhs in 1983-84, in a phased manner. The cost per child works out to approximately Rs 100 per annum or 50 paise per day for 200 days.

The Karnataka Council for Science and Technology took special interest in this matter in collaboration with the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore. District level units are being set up to manufacture energy food to provide appropriate amounts of proteins, vitamins and other

nutritional components based on easily available raw materials such as wheat, dal, groundnut, jaggery, etc. For pre-school children, a programme to supply milk and buns or bread has been started.

Cows and buffaloes could be supplied to the poor with bank loans, and the milk collected for distribution to the poor children under the nutrition programme, and only the balance sold to the public. A programme to merely collect and sell milk to urban centres of high purchasing power could have the effect of increasing malnutrition amongst the rural poor, though a few who own milch animals may earn a little more.

This aspect of directly taking care of the essential consumption of the poor is often lost sight of in our developmental plans. The green revolution increased production. It is our failure to take its benefits to the poor that increased inequality. One must have the heart to do it. And the institutions in the rural areas should be so restructured that the weaker sections of our population have their due say in matters pertaining to their development. The panchayats, co-operative societies and rural banks should adequately represent the rural poor and thereby become effective instruments in changing the rural power structure. What is basic to social justice is this change in the institutional set up. Otherwise, the less privileged sections of society will not benefit adequately from development, and inequality will increase, generating tremendous stresses and strains in society.

But, somehow, the will is lacking. Take for instance the concept of integrated credit plans, at the block and district levels, to ensure that essential agricultural and other activities do not suffer for want of credit. The nationalised banks are charged with this task. It is a small task for them as it represents a small portion of their total credit capacity. But to this day credit plans have remained on paper and have not been actually implemented even in well banked areas. To meet the credit needs of rural artisans, banks are supposed to

provide at least half a percent of their total advances as per the differential interest rate scheme. Even this low target has not been reached in many States and regions, though the target of such advances to village artisans should be much higher, and at least 2% to begin with, to be stepped up progressively.

Moreover, nothing has been done about consumption credit, in the wake of debt relief measures to relieve the rural poor from the clutches of the unscrupulous money lender. The Shivaraman Committee had made some suggestions to provide consumption credit to the rural poor. A beginning was also made in some States like Karnataka. But, unfortunately the draft plan is completely silent on this crucial subject. As a matter of fact, the flow of bank funds from undeveloped rural areas to developed urban areas is yet to be stopped and reversed. If the flow of funds is going to be so tardy and unrelated to priority needs, even the exercise of block plans may not increase production and employment, but only anger and frustration.

It is this basic imbalance between what is professed and what is actually done that needs to be corrected, if a qualitative change in plan implementation is to be achieved. Intensive effort will have to be made to achieve integrated rural development which will include not only the rural works programme but greater attention to social services such as education, health, electrification, housing, drinking water, child nutrition and generation of employment opportunities in village and small scale industries. Only then will the quality of life in rural areas improve and there will be scope for employment on a more continuous basis. It is only then that the flow of poverty from rural to urban areas will slow down and eventually stop altogether.

As regards rural industries, there is nothing that has not already been said for the past so many years. The failure has not been in the enunciation of policy but in the comprehensive awareness of the operational aspects and effective

follow up action on a nation-wide scale. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 fully recognised the importance of cottage and small scale industries and a decentralised industrial pattern of production. The first five-year plan itself had postulated 'common production programmes' to ensure that small units are enabled to fulfil their targets. Every assistance was to be given to the small units by way of supply of raw materials, finances, technical guidance, marketing etc. Reservation or demarcation of spheres of production, non-expansion of the capacity of large scale industry in certain spheres, and a cession on them, had all been clearly visualised.

The second plan and the Mahalanobis strategy also assigned an important place to village and small scale industry. Full employment was to be achieved 'in ten years or less'. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 assigned a key role to village and small scale industry. Industrial co-operatives were to be organised. Special agencies like the Small Industries Service Institute were to be set up to give close and comprehensive attention to the problem of small, decentralised units of production.

Now, the proposed District Industries Centre is expected to provide integrated service to small entrepreneurs. The available staff is to be reorganised for this purpose. It will be one more effort in the same direction. But is the Planning Commission clear as to why the previous effort to develop village and small scale industries did not succeed to the extent expected? If there is the political and bureaucratic will to do so, then that should be fully reflected in a massive operational strategy with predictable and measurable results.

The quantitative effect of what is proposed to be done should be stated product by product, and sector by sector, so that we can see what improvement is expected or planned compared to past years. The output-employment-capital ratios for the different items and components of the plan should be analysed. Both public and private sector activity

should be so studied and form part of a unified framework.

The overall plan size projected for 1982-83 is Rs. 116,240 crores of which the public sector outlay is Rs. 69,380 crores. The important thing is how the various components fit into and interact with the total operations of the economy. A mere increase in the number of items reserved for the small scale sector need not automatically result in a significant increase in employment in this sector. What is now called the 'tiny' units, having an investment in plant and machinery upto one lakh of rupees, have come up largely in cities and large towns. Moreover, a small unit need not be assumed to be less capital intensive or more labour intensive. What we should be primarily concerned with is the employment and output per unit of capital. This should be specifically built into all our incentives and strategies.

The draft plan document states that 'the programme for the development of small scale industries will be oriented mainly to rehabilitate the sick units, to assist the household and rural industries to expand and to promote the growth of mostly tiny industrial units in rural areas and small towns'. But has an analysis in depth been made as to what is there, or not there, in the socio-economic environment in the country which makes these units sick? Why is it that village trades and handicrafts continue to wither away? Why are the consumption and employment needs of rural folk not being met, in increasing measure, by the rapid growth of labour intensive cottage and village industries as distinct from capital intensive units of various sizes?

The time has come when we can no longer tinker with this problem. Mere lip service and high sounding generalisations will not do. Either we are serious about full employment or we are not. If we are, then a radical change will have to be made in our approach, priorities and the manner of implementation. It calls for continuous employment orientation to all our plans and programmes in a comprehensive, integrated and dedicated manner.

Employment

SURESH D TENDULKAR

THE Draft Five Year Plan (1978-83) which is supposed to have come into effect from March 1, 1976, is essentially a paper plan in the sense that it is basically a macro-plan prepared within the four walls of Yojana Bhavan without detailed deliberations with the States. Its sectoral and other targets are not yet backed by concrete projects and programmes (in fact some of the output and capacity targets in major sectors such as iron and steel, non-ferrous metals and engineering industries are to be carefully/closely studied/examined later (pp. 189-90)¹, its policy frame has not been concretised in specific proposals, and its administrative, organisational and institutional implications are yet to be worked out in detail.

This was only to be expected since it has been produced in a record time of five months under the compulsions of the premature termination of the fifth plan and the hasty introduction of the rolling plan method. The allocation of the public sector outlay between the Centre and the States is yet to be finalised pending (i) 'the detailed formulation of . . . sectoral programmes by the State and the Central ministries', (ii) 'the review of schemes . . . in the fifth Plan to determine the coverage of such schemes

in the next Plan' and (iii) 'the recommendations of the seventh Finance Commission and the decision of the government on these recommendations' some time later this year (p. 8, 1.55).

The position of the National Development Council (NDC) which met in March to discuss the document is not very clear. The resolution passed by the NDC 'generally welcomes the proposals in the Draft Plan in furtherance of these (national) objectives'. Perhaps the only specific statement found in the resolution mentions that 'the projections of employment opportunities indicated in the Plan . . . should be reviewed in detail in consultation with the State Government' (p. iii). This has to be seen in the context of the whole problem of Centre-State political and financial relations which are in a state of flux.

On top of all this, the current gloomy political scene seems to cast an ominous shadow on the seriousness with which the plan is likely to get political sanction and executive backing — the two crucial requirements for its possible acceptance as an action programme as also the prospects for its serious implementation. Because the plan proposals and policies have not yet taken a concrete shape, and because some of the circumstances mentioned above are clearly beyond the control of the Planning Commission, and evaluation of the

1. Page numbers or page numbers followed by section numbers or Table numbers appearing in brackets refer to the printed version of the *Draft Five Year Plan 1978-83* (April 1978)

document poses obvious difficulties.

What the plan document has done is essentially to present a set of calculations based on a multi-sectoral macro-model and detailed material balances. These calculations are intended to quantify certain social objectives at the aggregate national level and then work out their implications for the sectoral output and employment targets. Since the technical papers underlying these calculations are not yet released, it is not possible to make a systematic technical assessment.

One finds two extreme attitudes towards these model calculations. One is to regard them as sacrosanct and hence providing a panacea for all the problems. The other is to treat them as too abstract and hence useless for practical purposes. It is important to realise that these model calculations merely spell out the consequences of certain basic assumptions fed into the model after taking into account certain sectoral interdependence characteristics of the economic system. Their usefulness lies not in providing solutions to problems but in highlighting certain consequences of the basic assumptions which would not otherwise be obvious. These consequences, in turn, throw up certain problem areas which have to be tackled at the policy level.

It is in this light that we propose to focus attention on certain major problem areas with reference to the social objective of reduction in unemployment and poverty. We cite certain statistics regarding past performance not so much to claim that what has not been achieved in the past, cannot be done in the future but to highlight the magnitude of efforts involved. We also draw on certain relevant generalisation from various recent studies to bring the problem area into sharper focus. The intention is not to doubt the desirability of the social objective but to concentrate on the feasibility problems which have to be squarely faced if the

plan document is to be translated into an action programme.

Eradication of unemployment in 10 years was the election promise of the Janata Party when it fought the assembly elections in various States. After the Lok Sabha elections of March 1977 were won on the issue of democracy vs dictatorship, this was the next logical step towards building up an economic programme for the party. At the time this promise was publicised, it was at no more or no less superficial a level than the *goribi hatao* slogan of the earlier regime which it sought to replace. The task of working out the implications of this new slogan fell on the Planning Commission and it has addressed itself to this task at the *macro-level* in the document under consideration. While it is agreed that poverty is a more widespread phenomenon than unemployment, the underlying premise behind the eradication of unemployment has been that it would make a substantial dent on the problem of poverty.

As regards the direct statement about the reduction of poverty that it postulated over the next five or ten years, the plan document is delightfully vague. The brief discussions appearing at two places (p 37, 22-23 p 50, 280-81) are more confusing than enlightening. Nowhere is it clearly stated what would be the postulated percentages of the population below the poverty line in 1982-83 after taking into account the impact of 'the redistribution built into the plan'. Nor is there any mention about what part of the poverty population is assumed to be benefitted and the extent of the benefit. There is no estimate of the extent to which 'the consumption of the non-poor is correspondingly reduced'.

While it is possible to appreciate the enthusiasm of the Planning Commission (and the Janata Government) to establish a clear break with the past regime, it should certainly not have been stretched to the point of completely obliterating the very specification of poverty reduction! Such a totally inadequate specification is hardly conducive to any meaningful debate

about the feasibility questions and the all important problem of political commitment.

It is only hoped that this is not the beginning of 'rolling over' poverty from one plan to another. The vagueness about the very statement of the poverty alleviation objective does not permit any discussion about its possible connections with the reduction of unemployment. Presumably, in the macro-model structure, the poverty reduction has been exogenously postulated and the reduction in unemployment is a *consequence* of this specification combined with the assumptions related to the choice of technology and demand specification.

This is reflected in the reduction in the employment gap given by the difference between the adjusted labour force and expected employment both measured in terms of the standard person years of 273 days of 8 hours each. The base year estimated employment gap of 40.7 million person years in 1977-78 (or about one-fifth of the adjusted labour force) is expected to be reduced to 15.5 million person years in 1982-83 (or about 7 per cent of the adjusted labour force in that terminal year). This is proposed to be achieved by a phenomenally high compound rate of growth of labour absorption of 5.3 per cent per annum which is more than twice the corresponding growth rate of 2.2 per cent per annum for the labour force.

While the absolute magnitudes need not be taken as reliable projections in view of the admittedly 'severe data limitations' (p 87, 466), the broad orders of magnitude about the rate of labour absorption are clear indicators of the magnitude of efforts involved. An economic necessity of the proposition in view of the widespread unemployment and underemployment combined with the exogenous demographic constraints is quite obvious. We wish to focus attention on the three major consequences thrown up by the model calculations which are preconditions for the proposition to hold.

Before turning to a numerical summary presentation of these consequences, a pertinent obser-

vation by Professor Dantwala² may be noted. He emphasizes that the unemployment and underemployment are a proximate reflection of two sets of deeper causes, namely, (i) the inadequacy or total absence of an asset base (property or skill) and (ii) the exploitative institutional arrangements. A permanent solution to this problem can only be found by attacking these deeper causes and thereby ensuring the long-term economic viability of the unemployed and the underemployed. This would invariably involve the restructuring of the human and physical capital base as also the reorganisation of the production process. It is clear that this would effectively contribute towards the ultimate objective of reduction in poverty.

It is in the light of this perspective that we wish to concentrate on the political and institutional implications of the major preconditions that are required for the projected phenomenal increase in employment. These may be grouped under three major heads for the convenience of discussion.

(1) The resource mobilisation efforts required to achieve an aggregate growth rate³ of 4.7 per cent with a realistic incremental capital-output ratio of 4.2.

(2) The projected growth rate of 4.0 per cent per annum for gross output as well as labour absorption in agriculture so as to provide employment for 46 per cent of the expected incremental employment over the five years.

(3) The projected equal growth rates for both the gross output and employment in manufacturing at 6.85 per cent and in other services at 6.24 per cent so that these two sectors together may account for 43 per cent (including 18 per cent in manufacturing) of the expected incremental employment over the five years.

2. M.L. Dantwala 'Some Neglected Issues in Employment Planning', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, February 1978 pp 291-294

3. All the growth rates mentioned in the subsequent discussion refer to a compound growth rate per annum unless explicitly specified otherwise.

It may be noted by way of a general comment on (2) and (3) that the equal growth rates for gross output and employment imply that productivity per fully employed standard unit of labour remains invariant between the base and the target year. In other words, the model calculations address themselves to the problem of increasing the duration of wage or self employment and not on raising their productivity in terms of gross output.

Secondly, income generation in the form of value added in a sector is expected to grow at a rate slower than the rate of growth of gross output (p. 37, Table 2.2, p. 87, Table in section 4.66). This implies that the aggregate of wage and self employment incomes plus profits in each sector would not be growing as fast as employment so that the income earned by unit of labour in each sector would decline in the target year as compared to its level in the base year. This is possible only if there is a massive shift in the share of production in each sector away from the organised sector and towards the unorganised segment. This would indeed raise the technical problem of reconciling it with the earlier implication of invariance in productivity in terms of the gross output per unit of labour.

But, even ignoring this technical problem and apart from the organisational implications of the shift (which are discussed below) this raises the fundamental problem of whether the incomes generated (assuming they materialised) in each sector would be sufficient to ensure minimum levels of living to those who get additional wage and self-employment. No relevant information is revealed in the plan document to throw light on this problem so we have no alternative but to note it at this stage and proceed to the discussion of the major preconditions noted above.

In order to ensure an aggregate growth rate of 4.7 per cent with an aggregate incremental capital-output ratio of 4.2, the aggregate gross investment (at 1977-78 prices) is projected to grow at the rate of

10.7 per cent compared to 2.2 per cent achieved (at 1970-71 prices) over the period 1970-71 to 1975-76. The rate of acceleration of public investment will have to be much higher because it is assumed to account for 56 per cent of gross investment over the next five years as compared to its average share of less than 50 per cent in the recent past. The public sector savings are expected to contribute 27 per cent of the gross domestic savings over the next five years (p. 63, Table 3.6) by stepping up their share in annual gross domestic savings from 20.9 per cent in 1977-78 to 31.6 per cent in 1982-83 (p. 63, Table 3.8).

These assumed public savings would finance 46 per cent of the public investment, a major part of the remainder to be financed by a draft on household savings to the extent of 40 per cent of the public sector investment. The implied marginal savings rate for the government administration works out to 46 per cent and for the private households to 21.4 per cent (p. 63, Table 3.7 and pp. 73-74, Annexures III and IV) over the five year period.

The latter has to be considered in the context of the postulated (but unspecified) redistribution despite which the rate of savings for the households is expected to rise even though slightly from 16.4 per cent in 1977-78 to 17.4 per cent in the terminal year. It is indeed admitted 'that if as a result of the distributive measures contemplated in the Plan the savings propensity goes down, steps (again not specified in the document) will have to be taken to enhance it' (p. 6, 1.44). It is important to realise that this is expected to affect the 62 per cent of the gross domestic savings over the five year period (p. 63, Table 3.6). This is not so much to doubt the desirability of redistribution as to underline the resource mobilisation efforts which the public sector will have to undertake to make up the possible deficiency of a large magnitude in the household savings.

Without accounting for this factor, the additional resource

mobilisation by the Centre and the States is postulated to amount to Rs 13,000 crores over the five year period or about 19 per cent of the postulated aggregate budgetary resources (p 57, Table 3.2) to finance the public sector outlay. (The percentage would rise to 22 per cent if we add the 'uncovered gap'). The break-up of Rs 13,000 crores between taxation and contribution of public enterprises is not available but 'the tax measures of additional resource mobilisation will have to be adequate enough to raise the ratio of tax revenue to gross national product from 18.4 per cent in 1977-78 to about 23 per cent, if a public sector plan of a required size is to be financed'. (p. 61, 3.41).

While this ratio has risen (at current prices) from 13.5 per cent in 1970-71 to 14.9 per cent in 1974-75 and 17.4 per cent in 1975-76, it is important to note that there is an upper limit on this ratio and any additional step-up over an originally high percentage level would involve either a considerable hike in the taxation rates paid by the upper segment of the population or bring the additional population under the taxation net or a combination of both at higher administration costs at the margin. Additional constraints are imposed by the fact that more than three-fourths of the existing tax revenue is accounted for by indirect taxes.

The plan document does not contain any specific proposals for additional resource mobilisation but lists in general terms the measures that are by now familiar to the readers of the past plan documents. They include, among others, selective subsidy reductions, raising the rate of return from the Central and State government enterprises, agricultural income tax or its surrogates, revision of irrigation rates, electricity tariffs, bus fares and so on. All these suggestions as well as *ex ante* numerical assumptions made in the resource exercise are very familiar from the past plan documents and the post-mortem of their *ex post* failures is also available in the successive plan-appraisals.

The basic point is to highlight the magnitude of efforts postulated

which may turn out to be even higher if the postulated redistribution takes place and brings about a reduction in potential savings. It is necessary to spell out in specific terms the hard policy choices with unpalatable political consequences especially with regard to the structure of direct taxes and bringing agricultural incomes under the taxation net.

There is also an implicit and questionable assumption that the specific contents of the additional resource mobilisation by the Centre and the States would leave the remaining parts of the resource exercise unchanged and intact. It is hoped that more specific resource mobilisation proposals would be formulated in consultation with the central ministries and the State governments so as to ensure political commitment for resource mobilisation efforts and their possible consequences on the remaining part of the resource exercise would be duly examined and spelt out. It is clear, however, that any failure on the resource mobilisation and canalisation front (including private sector savings and investment) would adversely affect the other crucial parts of the employment strategy to which we now turn.

The second important precondition for the employment strategy of the plan involves the projected growth rate of 4.0 per cent for *both* gross output and employment in agriculture (p 5, Table 1.1 and p 87, Table in section 4.66). The growth rate of gross output materialised over 1967-77 has been 2.1 per cent (p 6, 1.45). The projection of output has been worked out from the demand side for fulfilling the (unspecified) objective of poverty reduction and would be absolutely crucial to satisfy the demand for wage goods when the proposed shift in purchasing power takes place.

From the supply side, the precondition is based on four basic assumptions (i) creation of additional irrigation potential, (ii) significant improvement in the utilisation of the existing and new irrigation potential, (iii) wide-spread diffusion of HYV technology in irrigated

areas with an appropriate crop-mix and (iv) productive absorption of labour in agriculture at rates much higher than those experienced in the past. We now turn to a brief discussion of each so as to locate possible problem areas.

(i) Creation of additional (net) irrigation potential of 8 million hectares (Mh for short) (p. 136, 9.54) in comparison with 6.80 Mh achieved over the first three plans, 1.50 Mh over the annual plans, 2.80 Mh over the fourth plan⁴ and 4.3 Mh over 1974-78 (p. 135, Table 9.3). The rate of growth of gross irrigated area is postulated to rise at 5.54 per cent compared to 3.18 per cent achieved over the period 1961-62 to 1973-74 (p 130, 9.13). The gross irrigation potential is to be increased by 17 Mh (compared to 8.6 Mh during 1974-78) including 9 Mh as a result of minor irrigation.

Apart from the administrative and organisational efforts involved in a steep step up of this magnitude, the following basic problem areas may be noted. (a) There do not seem to be any major or medium irrigation projects on the horizon except those locked up in inter-State disputes. (b) The benefits of minor irrigation have been found to be much more concentrated in relatively higher sized holdings than those of public irrigation systems from major and medium irrigation projects.⁵ (c) The major scope for tapping ground water in future lies in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal and Orissa where the small average size of landholdings 'would raise questions both of the viability of tubewell investment, of the ability to finance such investment in the absence of satisfactory institutional and credit arrangements.'⁶ (d) Management of public tubewells has left much to be desired and their extension advocated in the plan document has to be clearly examin-

⁴ Union Government (Civil) *Supplementary Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1975-76*. Comptroller and Auditor General of India (1977), p 4.

⁵ C. H. Rao *Technological Change and Distribution of Gains in Indian Agriculture*. Macmillan and Company India, Delhi, 1975.

⁶ Bina Agarwal 'Agriculture'. *Seminar*, 227, July 1978, pp 12-22.

ed as regards their administration and management inputs.

(ii) Improvement in the utilisation of the created potential along with the efficient and equitable distribution (pp. 134-141, major sections a to c). In this connection, a recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General⁷ is a shockingly glaring testimony to our dismal record in the past. In 12 major projects covering over 6 million hectares of area planned to be irrigated, the average area actually irrigated over the five year period 1971-72 to 1975-76 was found to be merely 64.4 per cent. The receipts from most of these projects did not meet even the maintenance costs, let alone the interest charges.

The report brings out vividly the very unsatisfactory situation in the following important areas: (a) the construction of water courses and field channels, (b) the inequitable nature of the system of distribution of water from canals among farmers, (c) the inadequacy or total absence of control structures to minimise the loss of water during conveyance, (d) land levelling and reshaping to prevent waterlogging and ensure prompt drainage, (e) transmission losses, (f) inadequate maintenance, and (g) the inability to enforce the planned cropping pattern.

It may be noted that items (a) to (d) require cooperation among farmers because of the externalities involved and it is precisely in these respects that smaller farmers have been found to be at a disadvantage vis-a-vis bigger farmers and these have been major obstacles in the spread and utilisation of irrigation water and hence in the diffusion of HYV technology among small farmers. The success of the agricultural strategy would clearly depend on the solutions to these problems at administrative and political level.

(iii) The third basic assumption underlying the agricultural strategy relates to the widespread diffusion of the HYV technology with an appropriate crop-mix. The gross irrigated area as a proportion of gross cropped area is expected to increase from the observed 23.7 per cent in

1973-74⁸ and anticipated 27 per cent in 1977-78 (p. 38, 2.29-30) to 35 per cent in 1982-83 (p. 39, Table 2.5). For the major crops, the corresponding percentage is assumed to rise from 38.5 per cent in 1973-74⁸ to 54.0 per cent in 1982-83 for paddy and from 57.6 per cent in 1973-74⁸ to 79.6 per cent in 1982-83 for wheat (p. 39, Table 2.5) the bulk of this being assumed to be under the HYV technology.

As a result, the all-India average yield of paddy is expected to rise from 1246 kgs per hectare in 1975-76⁹ to 1417 kgs per hectare in 1982-83 (p. 39, Table 2.5) or by 1.85 per cent per annum and that of wheat from 1409 kgs per hectare in 1975-76¹⁰ to 1668 kgs per hectare in 1982-83 (p. 39, Table 2.5) or by 2.44 per cent per annum. These projected productivity increases are to be seen in the context of the recent problems of susceptibility of most common HYV varieties to rust and the need for developing new varieties in wheat whereas for rice, wide variability is soil and climatic conditions in the principle rice-growing States (West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu) requires the development of different types of strains to suit different agro-climatic local conditions.¹¹

Apart from these purely technological problems, recent studies have brought out the problems connected with adaptation and diffusion. The relevant generalisations in the present context may now be summarised. (a) Cross section evidence across States and regions in India in the recent period indicates that the spread of irrigation by itself has not been associated with significant yield and hence production increases.¹² (b) There is an adjustment lag.

8 Directorate of Economics and Statistics' *Estimates of Area and Production of Principal Crops in India 1975-76* Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Government of India, New Delhi (1977) p. 154.

9 Agricultural Prices Commission *Report on Price Policy for Kharif Cereals for the 1977-78 Season*, New Delhi (September 1977) p. 17.

10 Agricultural Prices Commission *Report on Price Policy for Wheat for the 1977-78 Season* New Delhi (March, 1977), p. 12.

11 Bina Agarwal cited in footnote 6.

12 M. L. Dantwala 'Future of Institutional Reform and Technological Change in the Agricultural Development of India' Mimeographed, October 1977.

between the availability of irrigation water and the adoption of optimal cropping pattern with new technology and this lag may be longer for the smaller size holdings.¹³ (c) The diffusion of new technology to newer areas as well as to smaller sized holdings is a relatively slow process with increasing extension and infrastructural costs.

Recalling the earlier observation regarding the disadvantages to which small farmers are subject in regard to the availability and efficient use of irrigation water, these findings highlight the step-up in extension, organisational and administrative efforts that would be involved in achieving the widespread diffusion of new technology with optimal cropping pattern in most of the irrigated areas.

(iv) We have so far been concerned with the assumptions underlying the projections of production targets in agriculture. The most crucial consideration behind these production targets has been the anticipated increased demand for wage goods that would result from the postulated more even distribution of the purchasing power. If the latter is to be achieved, the very crucial role of agriculture in providing productive employment becomes obvious. In the plan document, it is projected that 46 per cent of the incremental employment over the five year plan period would be absorbed in agriculture (p. 103, Table 4.18). In this connection, the relevant findings from recent studies suggest the following propositions: (a) The growth of agricultural production by itself is not a sufficient condition for augmenting employment.¹⁴ (b) Given the existing size structure of ownership between the seed-fertiliser technology and irrigation on the one hand and mechanisation leading to a displacement of labour on

13 V. M. Rao 'Linking Irrigation with Development: Some Policy Issues' *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 17, 1978, pp. 993-997.

14 M. L. Dantwala reference cited in footnote 2. Also see V. S. Vyas and G. Mathai 'Farm and Non-farm Employment in Rural Areas: A Perspective for Planning', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, February, 1978, pp. 333-347.

the other.¹⁵ (c) The labour use per unit of land has been generally found to be higher on smaller size operational holdings.¹⁶

These propositions basically confirm the casual observation in the last two years regarding the impact of the existing structure of land-holdings on the maldistribution of purchasing power. This was reflected in the unwanted stock accumulation of grains by the government as a result of two successive bumper harvests despite the prevalence of widespread hunger and malnutrition. A radical restructuring of the land ownership with simultaneous land development to increase its productivity is, therefore, a clear and inevitable precondition for the postulated productive absorption of additional manpower into agriculture.¹⁷ It needs to be emphasized that this is a *consequence*, and a very important one, of the model calculations presented in the plan document.

However, given the fact that landed interests dominate the power structure the best that can be expected with all the good intentions is the redistribution of the entire 'declared surplus' of 4.04 million acres hopefully in a more equitable and speedy fashion. Even if we suppose that the 'declared surplus' can be stretched somehow to double its size by plugging the loopholes in the land reform legislation and its speedy implementation and that it is acquired and effectively redistributed over the next five years, the moot question remains whether the post-redistribution landholding structure can productively absorb

over four-fifth of the additional labour force.

With the projected growth rate of 6.85 per cent for gross output and employment, the manufacturing industry is expected to provide 18 per cent of the additional employment whereas other services (excluding electricity, transport and construction) with a corresponding projected growth rate of 6.24 per cent (both for gross output and employment) are expected to account for 25 per cent of the incremental employment generation (p. 103, Table 4.18). These 'other services' include trade, storage and warehousing, banking and insurance, real estate and ownership of dwellings, education, medical health and miscellaneous other services (p. 55, Annexure I, sectors 84 to 89).

From this description, it is clear that their growth is very much dependent on the rest of the productive economic activity in manufacturing and agriculture. The growth rate of value added is projected to be 4.67 per cent in manufacturing and 5.61 per cent in other services. In both these broad sectors, therefore, the value added is projected to grow at rates slower than the rate of growth of labour absorption. Employment is known to grow slower than value added in the organised segments of these sectors. Therefore, for each sector as a whole, the rate of growth of labour absorption can exceed that of value added only if there is a significant shift in the source of production away from the large scale organised segment and towards the unorganised sector.

To examine the issues arising out of this shift, the unorganised sector can be further divided into the following segments:

(i) Cottage and village industries are predominantly household industries carried on within the household or village mostly by members of the household.

(ii) Modern small scale industries are basically non-household non-registered units located in the workshops and mostly carrying on productive activity with hired labour. These may be complementary to the organised sector if pro-

ducing ancillaries or competing with it if producing the same or similar product or a product satisfying the same need.

(iii) Small scale retailing, wholesaling and other servicing units located in households or shops with mostly self employment as a form of organisation.

Although firm data are hard to find, it is a well known judgement that (i) and (iii) are most likely to be relatively more labour using per unit of gross output than their organised counterparts. As regards the modern small scale industries, although they are small in scale as regards investment and locationally dispersed, it is by no means certain that they are more labour using than their organised counterparts. In a recent census of the small scale industrial units,¹⁸ it was found that all the units covered in the census contributed 14.5 per cent of the value added but only 10 per cent of the employment in the entire manufacturing industry (including the organised registered sector).

Moreover, of the units covered in the census, at least 12 per cent accounting for 55 per cent of the gross output and employing 20 or more workers formed part of the organised registered sector. The basic point is that the policy of encouraging the modern small scale industry may not help substantially in reducing unemployment and underemployment and may most probably help better-off segments of the urban-based entrepreneurs. As a result, it may not make a significant dent on the lower-end poverty so far as income generation is concerned.

As regards the cottage and village industries, there are two-fold problems. Purely local and traditional demand for their products would clearly depend on the prosperity in agriculture and its composition. It has been found in certain recent micro-studies that the surplus generated by the prosperity brought

18 Development Commissioner, Small Scale Industries, *Report on Census of Small Scale Industrial Units*, Volumes I and II, Ministry of Industry, Government of India, New Delhi (1977).

15 C.H.H. Rao reference cited in footnote 5 and S. Mehra 'Some Aspects of Labour Use in Indian Agriculture' *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, October-December 1976, pp. 95-121.

16 S. Mehra reference cited in footnote 15 and B. Dasgupta et al. *Village Society and Labour Use*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1977.

17 For a feasible scheme in this connection, a reference may be made to B.S. Minhas 'Rural Poverty, Land Distribution and Development Strategy' in T.N. Srinivasan and P.K. Bardhan (Eds) *Poverty and Income Distribution in India*, Statistical Publishing Society, Calcutta (1974), pp. 397-416.

about by the green revolution under the existing landholding structure tends to be spent on commodities by the urban based organised sector.¹⁹ If this is a widespread phenomenon, it would mean that only the agricultural prosperity brought about within a radically different landholding structure can generate the demand for non-agricultural activity in the cottage and village industries.

As we have observed earlier, the change in the rural power structure required to bring this about does not seem to be on the horizon. Secondly, to the extent these industries cater to the urban-based demand (like handicrafts, specialised textiles) the exploitative institutional arrangements have managed to keep those artisans and craftsmen in poverty. There are significant economies of scale in marketing so far as developing expertise and risk-spreading are concerned and the Jawaja experiment of Professor Ravi Mathai highlights the difficulties of integrating small artisans into the national market.

It may also be noted that the proposed large scale construction of rural roads under the revised minimum needs programme would have the effect of integrating the villages in a country wide market structure. While this would have obvious other advantages, to the extent the rural asset remains unaffected, the possible unintended adverse effect this may have on the traditional rural non-agricultural activities requires closer examination.

Finally, since the modern small scale industries will have the experience as well as expertise of dealing with the bureaucracy there is a danger that credit, market reservation and other facilities earmarked for the combined cottage, village and small scale sector may not reach the cottage and village industries but may be appropriated by the modern small scale segment. This danger is indeed real in view of the recent experience of amalga-

mation of the Small Farmers Development Agency and the agency for Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers which is reported to have resulted in most of the benefits being enjoyed by the small farmers with low percolation to the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers.

Coming finally to the private organised manufacturing industry, the 'strategy is based on the broad premise that the big increase in investment that is proposed in employment intensive activities, irrigation and in infrastructure like power and roads, and minimum needs like water supply, health, primary education and housing' will bring about a 'better utilisation of the capacity already created' (p. 186, 12.21). This strategy is clearly inconsistent with another and perhaps more plausible statement found in the same document (p. 1, 1.8) that 'the pattern of industrial development that has emerged obviously reflects the structure of effective demand which is determined by the distribution of incomes. An unduly large share of resources is thus absorbed in production which relates directly or indirectly to maintaining or improving the living standards of higher income groups'.

If this is true, then the better capacity utilisation of the existing industrial structure may require a more and not less concentrated structure and a faster rate of growth of additional incomes. In view of this consideration, it is necessary to sort out in clear terms the role of the organised manufacturing sector over the next ten years and what to do with the already created unwanted capacity that may compete with modern small scale or cottage and village industries.

It is also possible that if the reservation of production prescribed for the small scale sector cannot be fulfilled by that sector due to supply bottlenecks, it could create artificial scarcities and it is the organised sector that may be in a better position to take advantage in such circumstances. Growth of a part of the modern small scale industry producing ancillaries would

also depend on the expansion as well as capacity utilisation in the organised sector. Moreover, the proposed import liberalisation to correct some of the distortions of high-cost import-substituting industrialisation may affect not only the organised segment of the manufacturing sector but also the modern small scale industry.

The issues raised in this section highlight the necessity of working out a meaningful disaggregation of the manufacturing sector into appropriate segments and then formulating an appropriate policy for each after taking into account the interrelations among these segments as also between agriculture and industry. In view of these issues, the proposed significant shift away from the organised segment clearly implies a substantial reorganisation of the production processes in non-agriculture along with the supporting changes in the institutional framework.

In view of the tentative nature of the draft plan document mentioned in the beginning, an attempt has been made to spell out the political and institutional implications of the model calculations presented in the plan with regard to the major objective of employment creation. We have chosen to focus attention on three crucial consequences of the model calculations, namely, those connected with (a) the resource mobilisation efforts (b) the growth target in agriculture, and (c) the growth target in manufacturing and other services.

A closer examination of these crucial consequences brought out the implied need not only for achieving the high growth targets but more significantly for the restructuring of the asset base and the reorganisation of the production process that is necessary to bring about the postulated phenomenal increase in the rate of productive labour absorption. This, in a nutshell, is what is implied by the political slogan of eradication of unemployment in ten years. Is this going to be backed by a serious political commitment and support structure? It is a BIG question mark.

¹⁹ V M Rao reference in footnote 13 cites the results of one such study. Also see V S Vyas and G M Mathai reference in footnote 14 and H Dandekar and S Brahme 'Role of Rural Industries in Rural Development' mimeographed (June 1977).

Next phase in rural development

RAJ KRISHNA

THIS paper sets out for consideration and criticism a few thoughts on the emerging approach to rural development

The present Planning Commission has accomplished at least one task — the task of allocating for rural development a record outlay of the order of Rs 30,000 crores. The Commission has also created a favourable atmosphere for rural development — an atmosphere in which the critical role of voluntary agencies in rural development activity is recognised.

The need for primary stress on rural development can be appreciated by recalling some simple facts. Even after 27 years of planned industrialisation, in which we have succeeded in becoming the eighth industrial power in the world, 294 million people remain below the poverty line, 20.5 million person years remain unemployed and 81

per cent of the poverty and 80 per cent of the unemployment are located in the rural areas. Besides, 79 per cent of the population and 82 per cent of the labour force still live and work in the villages. An answer to India's poverty and unemployment therefore, has to be found in the rural sector.

In other countries, industrialisation reduces the proportion of the labour-force occupied in agriculture. In many Asian countries this ratio has recently declined to about half or less. But in India it has not diminished at all during the sixty years, 1911 to 1971. It was about 74 per cent in 1911 and it is 74 per cent even now. The Indian experience is unique in this respect. Therefore, we must conclude that industrialisation of the western type alone will not reduce poverty and unemployment in India. Some other pattern of development will have to be adopted — a pattern which carries the benefits of development directly to neglected areas and neglected social classes. We cannot carry on with imported wisdom alone. We are forced to be original.

*Edited version of a speech at the National Seminar on Rural Development — 'Focus on the Weakest' (April 28, 1978) at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

So far as allocations are concerned, it should be appreciated that the provision for rural development has been nearly doubled from about Rs. 15,000 crores in the fifth plan to Rs. 30,000 crores in the sixth plan. This allocation is the largest ever made for rural development in any plan. It includes provision for the most ambitious irrigation programme ever undertaken. Seventeen million additional hectares are to be brought under irrigation in the next five years, of which 9 million hectares would be under minor irrigation. The allocation for irrigation alone has been increased more than 100% to Rs. 7,900 crores.

For rural electrification, the provision has been doubled to Rs. 3,600 crores. For rural health programmes, again, the provision is nearly doubled from Rs. 700 crores in the fifth plan to Rs. 1,300 crores in the sixth plan. Large amounts have also been provided for rural roads (Rs. 800 crores), rural water supply (Rs. 800 crores), hill and tribal development (Rs. 800 crores), rural education (Rs. 1,400 crores), rural nutrition (Rs. 150 crores), and rural industries (Rs. 1,000 crores). The escalation of outlay under these headings between the fifth plan and the sixth plan ranges between 55 and 77 per cent. The provision for housing for the landless has been increased 10 times to Rs. 500 crores.

The financial centralisation that has come about in India is really amazing. Vast amounts are collected and allocated in New Delhi. It is high time that more of the allocative decisions are decentralised. State governments are short of funds even for the maintenance of assets created during the last five plan periods. Because of the paucity of funds, village roads are damaged by rains and dust-storms, channels silt up; embankments crack up and irrigation structures deteriorate. Resources available to State governments for creating new assets in the rural areas are also limited.

32 Therefore, through all possible mechanisms, larger resources, earmarked for rural development, have to be placed in the hands of the

State governments. By allocating a very large sum of money for rural development, the Planning Commission has made a correspondingly larger transfer of resources to the States absolutely essential. It is to be hoped that the revision of the Gadgil formula and the Finance Commission formulae will enable the States to have ample resources for asset-creation as well as asset-maintenance in the villages.

In spite of the fact that more than 43 per cent of the total public sector plan outlay (Rs. 29,925 crores out of Rs. 69,380 crores) has been allocated for rural development, the Planning Commission has been criticised for not providing sufficient funds for rural development. On the other hand, there are critics who say that the Commission is going to de-industrialise India. But if this issue of allocation for rural development is examined in detail, both these extremist criticisms appear to be unfair.

The new plan provides all the funds needed for bringing 17 million additional hectares under irrigation. This is the maximum area that the irrigation machinery can possibly undertake to cover during the next five years. As many as nine new fertiliser plants are included in the industrial plan. And Rs. 4,800 crores are provided for fulfilling ambitious physical targets of infrastructure and social service development in the rural areas under the Revised Minimum Needs Programme. The official administrative machinery and other agencies will find it difficult even to fulfill these physical targets. This is the first consideration that limits the financial allocation for rural development.

Secondly, it is not generally appreciated that rapid rural development itself requires a correspondingly rapid development in industries supplying inputs for rural development. Rural development requires many industrial inputs, e.g. fertilisers, pesticides, cement, pumps and pipes for irrigation, steel for pumps and pipes, stationery for rural schools, medicines for rural dispensaries and heavy machinery for rural electrification.

A little bit of input-output algebra would show that if more funds are allotted for direct outlay on rural development and insufficient funds for producing the inputs required from outside rural areas, rapid rural development itself will not be sustainable. Shortages of inputs will slow down the process of rural development. Therefore, we need a balanced allocation of funds among sectors which promote rural development (a) directly, and (b) indirectly. The Planning Commission has tried to provide such a balanced allocation.

On the other hand, it is quite wrong to say that the Commission is de-industrialising India. In fact, to support rural development industrial development will have to go on at the average annual rate of 6.7%. But further investment in some metallurgical industries can be slowed down or postponed because they have some surplus capacity at present. We are exporting about Rs. 500 crores worth of engineering goods. Without these exports some metallurgical industries would have an even larger surplus capacity. For basic industries other than the metallurgical, e.g. fertilisers, cement, power, and power equipment, large investments are provided in the plan. The investment in the electric power sector alone is being doubled. And more than 25 new cement plants are to be established.

Considering the maximum absorptive capacity of the system servicing rural areas and the minimum investment required to produce industrial inputs for rural development, the allocation of about Rs. 30,000 crores (or 43 per cent of the total public sector outlay) is not insufficient. Nor is the allocation for basic industries insufficient.

The next issue we should consider is the methodology of rural planning. As a result of thinking within the Planning Commission, and discussions in various seminars during the last one year, a strong consensus has emerged about the essential ingredients of good rural planning. It is accepted, first, that the unit of planning can be the district

or the block or a group of villages or even one village, depending on the capacity or the domain of the planning agency. It can also be a river basin or a catchment area or a forest belt or a hill range.

It is also accepted that rural planning has to be comprehensive or integrated in the sense that it should cover the growth of crop production, animal husbandry, forestry and fishing, local industry, infrastructure and social services.

The area plan should be based on a scientific inventory of all the natural resources of the area. It should not be assumed that the natural resources of the area are fully known or can be known by simple observation. The truth is that up to 1975 as much as 63 per cent of the area coverable by systematic hydrogeological surveys had been actually surveyed. And only 43 per cent of the total geographical area of the country had been covered by systematic mineral resource surveys. The available estimates of mineral reserves are often based on incomplete mapping.

Similarly, the extent of detail available about soils and forest resources varies from area to area, for some areas it is adequate but for others it falls far short of planning requirements. Before a good area plan can be made, it is necessary that all available data on natural resources be pooled, and gaps in the data are filled by fresh surveys.

Investment in natural resource surveys has a very high social return, for it identifies new income-raising possibilities and enables a number of productive schemes to be formulated with a high probability of success. The Chandrapur resource inventory should be cited in this connection. The inventory brought out the following facts which amateurs could never know: as many as 72,000 additional underground water outlets can be set up in the area without affecting the recharge, the irrigation area can be multiplied two-and-a-half times; annual fish production can be increased 17 times; and the forestry

resources of the area can support four new paper mills, tassar cultivation and wood-working units. Such data can be easily translated into sound schemes for investment and employment.

In addition to the natural resource inventory, a benchmark socio-economic survey is necessary for area planning. The survey should cover basic data about the productive assets of the area, output and input flows, consumption levels and the extent of poverty, the pattern of employment, unemployment and skills available, the trade of the area, and people's access to infrastructure and social services.

Armed with natural resource data and socio-economic data, planning teams consisting of economists, technologists and administrators can easily put together a development plan for the area, including specific schemes for the development of every sector.

A manpower budget must be a part of the plan. In fact it is the manpower budget for full employment which makes comprehensive planning necessary and possible. When the objective is to provide employment to every single unemployed or under-employed person in the area, so that every family is enabled to have a minimum annual income of Rs 4,000, planning has to be multi-sectoral. For, except in areas where productivity is already high and population density is relatively low, it is not possible to plan local full employment without accelerating activity in a number of sectors. The objective of the manpower budget is simply to ensure that the proposed activities in all sectors would together absorb the present labour surplus as well as the additions to the workforce over the next five to ten years at an income level close to the poverty line.

Needless to say, the individual schemes included in an area plan should be technically sound. Their costs and benefits should be carefully calculated. In the case of irrigation, transport and industrial schemes, optimum locations must be

chosen and detailed blueprints prepared.

In short, rural planning should receive an adequate input of technical and economic knowledge. When large-scale industrial schemes are formulated, considerable investment is made to get feasibility reports prepared by competent consultants. But when rural planning is undertaken, junior government servants or non-official amateurs are expected to draft schemes in a hurry. These schemes put together without any professional input of technical economic knowledge, cause enormous physical damage and economic waste. Therefore, the principle of professionalising rural planning must be fully accepted.

The cost of every scheme as well as the whole area plan should, of course, be calculated in detail. All bankable schemes relating to soil improvement, irrigation, fishing, forestry, animal husbandry and small-scale industries should be submitted for sanction to financial institutions. And non-bankable schemes relating to transport, water supply, electrification, health and education, etc., should be presented to the concerned departments or corporations. So far as these latter sectors are concerned, planners in some areas may only be able to work out needs on the basis of the minimum physical standards specified in the five-year plan and leave it to the departments and corporations to formulate detailed schemes.

The schemes already being implemented in the areas by the departments of the State governments should, of course, be subtracted from the total area plan in arriving at the additional finance required.

The five-year plan 1978-83 has made a provision of Rs. 2,800 crores for area oriented programmes of rural development. This provision includes finance for the drought-prone area programme, the command area development programme, the small farmers' development programme, the hill and tribal area development programme and block-level planning. The intention is that all these programmes should cover 3 500 blocks by 1983. Since all these are area-oriented programmes, an

effort should be made to merge them and unify their patterns of financial assistance

The distinction between area-oriented and target group oriented programmes is immaterial, because except where a benefit is indivisible, as in the case of a road, all area plans should be designed to carry most of the public sector resources and the services to the weakest sections of the society. And, ultimately, every delivery scheme must reach and be tailored to the specific needs of every poor family. The 'antyodaya' approach or micro planning for every deprived family is the inescapable culmination of micro planning for an area

A large allocation for area development, as distinguished from allocations for sectoral departments, can fulfil its purpose only if there is no rigidity about the types of activities that may be financed out of it. The area development agency should have delegated authority to formulate and implement schemes in any sector as required for the balanced development of the area. Only such decentralised planning can supplement and reduce the deficiencies of rigid sectoral planning. By its very nature, sectoral planning cannot provide for the specific priority needs of poor areas and poor families. Area planning alone can do so.

It is necessary to emphasise that while comprehensive area planning is undertaken, on-going schemes and any immediately identifiable new schemes should continue to be implemented. There is no justification for postponing all action until a comprehensive area plan is made. Every available individual scheme, with some merit, should be implemented without delay. But a year or two must be devoted, side by side, to the preparation of the comprehensive plan. For, such a plan would give a perspective on the full potential of the area, the requirements of full employment and the investment needed over a period of five to ten years

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This kind of framework for area planning commands a very broad-based agreement today among official as well as non-official

workers engaged in the field of rural development.

Since the urban intelligentsia is often overtaken by despondency about the prospects of rural development, it may be useful to note here that in scores of areas in India, comprehensive plans of the kind mentioned above, or good individual schemes, have been made or are being implemented by official as well as non-official agencies under good leadership. Many of these schemes have succeeded in raising thousands of families above the poverty line within a period of three to five years. Almost every significant rural development scheme has been effective in raising incomes in some regions of the country. There are always some areas in which the command area scheme, the drought-prone area scheme, the small farmer development scheme, the crop development scheme, the intensive extension scheme, one of the credit and input supply schemes, a village industry scheme, a works scheme or a non-official scheme brought about a significant improvement in the earnings of poor households, provided that the scheme delivered productive irrigation or animal husbandry or industrial assets to them along with the necessary linkages.

It is essential that these success-cases are objectively evaluated and documented. The documentation of these cases will provide training and inspiration to workers struggling without success in other areas. And, it will positivise the thinking of those who believe that poverty cannot be eliminated. The truth is that concentrated and dedicated work, on scientific lines, to develop remunerative activities can eliminate poverty in almost any area within five years or so

On the question of the implementation of rural development programmes, a few important issues and suggestions can be highlighted for consideration.

First, since autonomous corporations and agencies have consistently performed better than departments, we can propose that rural development work should be increasingly

entrusted to autonomous bodies. Everyone recognises that the dairy corporation, the fertiliser corporation, the agricultural finance and refinance corporations, some of the small farmers agencies, drought-prone area agencies, and command area authorities and some of the banks have proved to be reasonably effective delivery systems. The lesson of this experience is that on the official side non-departmental agencies should be the main instruments for rural development work. They should be given a clear objective, substantial autonomy, sufficient finance and a fully professional management and technical expertise

Second, more and more work should be entrusted to non-official agencies. Many of these agencies have good leaders and professionals working in the field. Government departments should help them, legally, administratively, technically and financially, to make and implement area plans. All of us are hoping that the Working Group on the Role of Voluntary Agencies in Rural Development will make detailed recommendations to ensure that voluntary effort can be mobilised for rural development to the maximum possible extent, and a healthy and creative relationship is established between them and the government agencies. The voluntary agencies themselves can perhaps take up the responsibility of making and implementing area plans in at least 300 blocks. The agencies which already have high-grade planning and action capabilities will have to help and train other agencies and their workers.

A number of academic institutions and private consultancy firms have also developed specialised competence in rural planning in recent years. Their services should also be mobilised to the maximum extent. In addition, of course, business firms sincerely interested in rural development should be persuaded to place a part of their technical and managerial resources at the service of the rural people

Regarding coordination at the district level, it is an established principle that a high-powered rural

development planning and coordination body must exist at that level. It should be chaired by the Collector, and it should have representatives of all the government agencies, financial institutions, and semi-official and non-official agencies doing development work in the district. This body, on the Maharashtra pattern or the U.P. pattern or the SFDA pattern, should have the decentralised responsibility and power to get area plans made, and to have them implemented by all departments and institutions in a coordinated way. It should allocate the unallocated area development fund placed at its disposal. These unallocated area funds should be additional to the amounts budgeted for the sectoral departments.

In due course, when panchayats are re-elected and revitalised, the responsibility for area planning and development can be progressively transferred to them.

Deficiencies in the credit system are proving to be the greatest obstacles to rural development. The basic fact is that the supply of institutional credit (including all short-term, medium-term and long-term credit given by commercial banks and cooperatives) is only about one-third of the total flow of rural credit. Of this only one-third is given to small farmer households (with less than five acres) although these households constitute about two-thirds of all agricultural households. This disparity in the distribution of institutional credit can be reduced only if at least half of the institutional credit is reserved for the small farm sector.

The case for this reservation is very strong indeed. For, given access to sufficient credit and material inputs, small farmers consistently produce more per hectare than large farmers. Labour absorption per hectare is also higher on small farms. And many recent studies show that, except in some areas, the overdue rates of small farmers are lower than the overdue rates of large farmers. Thus, on balance, the lending institutions run no higher risk in lending to small farmers than they do in lending to large farmers. Besides, a part of the

risk of small farmer lending is covered by government guarantees or grants.

The lending procedures are heart-breaking for small farmer and landless borrowers. The paper work, the travel, the lobbying and the bribing required for getting loans is excessive, and often raises the effective cost of institutional credit to the level of money-lenders' interest rates. Discouraged by the cost of getting institutional credit, small borrowers are forced to go back to the money-lenders. In spite of instructions to the contrary, land security continues to be insisted upon by bank branch managers.

The solution to this set of problems requires that the senior-most officers of every bank and cooperative give their personal attention to rural lending and minimise the paper work, the security requirements and other inconveniences imposed on borrowers. The staff working in rural branches should be specially recruited and trained so that they are willing to stay and serve in the rural areas, they have adequate knowledge of rural problems, and they have some sympathy for small borrowers.

The basic principle which our bankers have yet to accept is that large-scale developmental lending to small rural borrowers requires that the lenders should chase the borrowers instead of waiting in their offices for borrowers to come and go through the ordeal of trying to get loans. It is the duty of lenders to identify every possible project or purpose for which a repayable loan can be given to every small borrower of an area, to prepare the loan applications on behalf of the borrowers, and to sanction and deliver the loans. In other words, the aim should be 'saturation-lending', i.e., lending for every worthwhile project of every small borrower in the command area of every lending agency within a definite period of time, and the entire work of saturation-lending must be done by the lenders.

At the international level, development banks, such as the World Bank, have clearly accepted the principle of chasing the borrower,

preparing projects and lending for them. The same approach will have to be adopted by lenders at the rural level.

There are only two other issues I would like to touch upon. First, it must be bluntly acknowledged that the leakage ratio applicable to public sector outlays in the rural sector in India is extremely high. Only a small fraction of Central and State allocations for direct rural use really reaches the rural areas, and a much smaller fraction reaches the rural poor. With a high leakage ratio the intended pumping of the large sum of Rs. 30,000 crores into rural areas may aggravate rural inequality instead of reducing it. A large part of the amount may be simply soaked up by the rural oligarchy and the functionaries of the delivery system.

In this sense, a rural development strategy is much more risky than the strategy of developing large-scale industries even though we have no alternative to a rural development strategy. The delivery of small bits of resources to millions of poor households spread over the vast rural landscape of India is an operation which can lead to unprecedented wastage, misappropriation and corruption.

The only insurance against this danger is the quickest possible politicisation and unionisation of the rural poor in every block. I have been advocating the establishment of the public fund which should subsidise some of the expense involved in organising the rural poor. If the use of public funds for financing electioneering by the resourceless is now considered necessary, its use for unionising the poor is even more imperative. Only the unions of the poor can ensure that they get their due share of credit, water, pumps, animals, inputs, assets, and infrastructure and social services which are meant to be delivered to them under numerous laws and schemes made by the Central and State governments. Only the unions of the poor can ensure that panchayats and cooperatives are not captured by the rural rich. Only the unions of the poor can

pressurise the administration to administer rural schemes without laxity and corruption. Thus, it is critical for achieving the distributive goals of the new plan that political workers, social workers and trade union leaders immediately undertake the task of unionising the poor throughout India with some public assistance.

Finally, it must be recognised that in many parts of India the distribution of non-land inputs and assets cannot be tilted in favour of the poor unless land itself is redistributed. The land ceiling legislation has proved to be ineffective because the national leadership relied only on the bureaucracy for its implementation. Learning from Japan and Taiwan, we have to entrust the implementation of land ceilings to village committees in which the landless beneficiaries have at least 50 per cent representation. These committees should be fully empowered by law to correct land records, and draw up redistribution plans for every village. These plans should become legally effective subject to only one appeal being allowed to every aggrieved person. This appeal should be disposed of by a special tribunal within six months.

If village land committees are established, empowered and activated, with these stipulations, the true surplus of distributable land can be identified, and the process of redistribution accelerated and completed within a short, definite period of time. It is also a matter of the greatest importance that tenancy reform in the sense of the acquisition of ownership by cultivating tenants of the lands they cultivate, and the transfer of land to the landless, should be a single coordinated process.

In conclusion, I would only say that the planners have done their limited job of allocating an adequate share of centralised resources for rural development and outlining the policies and programmes required to accelerate rural growth. But the success of all policies and programmes ultimately depends on field workers.



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Books

PLANNING INDIA'S FUTURE by Oron Ghosh Minerva Associates, Calcutta, 1978.

ACADEMICS have become so specialised in the present day that scholars are only able to get segmented views of reality. Thus the 'omnibus' social science of political economy has been replaced by the narrow disciplinary bounds of politics, economics, sociology, philosophy, etc. The result is that only a part of any phenomenon is studied by scholars belonging to one discipline and the sum total of segmented truth does not necessarily become the whole truth. In this context, it is encouraging to find the scholar attempting to make a holistic study of social and economic phenomena. Oron Ghosh has attempted this task in the book under review.

There is another aspect of the book which makes it welcome. The author has attempted to destroy a long-standing academic myth that history is a subject and not a method for understanding contemporary reality.

But when these two good features of the book have been noticed, there is not much else to recommend it. It deals mainly with the 'modernisation' of India. According to the author, this process involves changes in the economy, society, polity and philosophy as reflected in the day to day life of the common man. He, therefore, tries to cull out a picture of the Indian ethos and attempts to analyse the existing situation in terms of both natural and human resources and cultural values and mores. He tries to make a critique of the various plan models which have been prescribed and practised since Independence and makes suggestions regarding what should be done in the future. He also attempts to survey the development of India from the food gathering stage to the present day and analyse the effect of social and religious forces on the everyday existence of the common Indian today.

It may straightaway be remarked that the task the author sets before himself is stupendous and a volume of 200 pages can hardly do justice to it. Even if the analytical tools used by the author were absolutely sharp (which they are not) and even

if he were to collect and collate all the related data (which he does not) an exercise of this nature would necessarily end in producing a simplistic and perhaps even a 'vulgar' picturisation of the tremendously complex Indian reality.

The book turns out to be much worse than even that because the author foists his theories on facts and, while on the one hand he tries to use the method of contemporary history, he fails in using the very basic methods of even conventional history. Lacking a solid foundation of facts, the book turns out to be a mere collection of prescriptions. And need it be emphasised that a prescription without diagnosis is extremely dangerous?

Even then, were the author original and had something new to say, the book would have been useful. But as it is, it contains only oft-repeated questions like 'Is faith in Karma responsible for the Indian's fatalism?' 'Are Indians primarily religious/spiritual and hence not quite scientific/materialistic?' etc. And added to such questions and pontifications on them is a critique of the Nehru-Mahalanobis and such other models of planning.

The felicity with which the author uses (and misuses) social science jargon is another serious weakness of the book. For instance, by describing the rulers of the Indus Valley and other ancient civilisations as a theo-technocracy, theo-aristocracy, theo-mercantiledom, religious bourgeoisie, etc., the author makes it clear that he either does not understand these terms or he uses them in a very frivolous manner.

Similarly, the author reduces discussion on various plan models and socio-cultural forces to extreme simplification. For instance, it seems that for him the only major cultural stream in India is that of Puranic Hinduism and that the Muslims and people of other religious persuasions as well as the growing a-religious (secular) sections of the population do not have any role in shaping India's future. The author commits the same mistake which the famous (or notorious) 'Indianisers' did in their analysis of Indian history, i.e., thinking that Indian history came to a stop in 1000 A.D. and started again in 1947 A.D. It is the missing millennium in his analysis of history which causes

the author to let himself get bound down in trying to find answers to the problems of India in the problems of Hinduism.

India's future remains unplanned by the author because of his lack of understanding of India's past.

Arvind N. Das

TURNING THE TIDE by Sudhir Sen. The Macmillan Company of India, 1978.

Sudhir Sen's book is a lucid attempt to refocus on agriculture as the centrepiece of any strategy for sustained economic development.

The book is divided into four parts. The Introduction establishes the quantitative dimensions and definitions of the problem of Indian poverty. The second part, a little less than a third of the book, is basically a re-appraisal of the record of Indian development since Independence and a discussion of some of the strategies and conceptions that have floated around development planners for over 30 years.

It is not, however, merely descriptive. Interspersed throughout are the author's own criticisms on the ad hoc character of much of Indian planning, his generous acknowledgement of the tremendous gains that India has made since Independence, as well as optimistic assertions of the tremendous potential that India's natural endowments afford. If there is one theme predominant in these chapters it is that 'we are running an extremely tight race between food and population' and that time is not on our side for 'we are losing, not winning this race.' What is needed more than ever is an 'infallible' and 'core' strategy to launch a 'multisided attack on all fronts' on what is the central battlefield.

'The marathon war against hunger and poverty we are now locked in must be fought on our farm land — some 350 million acres of arable lands; they are the battlefields where the war must be fought — and won or lost. The soldiers who must bear the brunt of this fighting are our farmers, the actual tillers of the land. The sixty million farm families comprise our army.'

The third part then is the meat of the book. It is here that the central propositions of the 'core' strategy are put forward and which we will seek to examine. The conclusion which comprises the last part is a four page summary of the action programme that logically follows from the preceding pages of analyses.

The greatest merit of *Turning the Tide* is the author's insistence that a combination of technical and structural changes in agriculture is the key to genuine advancement. It is a welcome reassertion of the centrality of the 'land question'. The possibility

for a truly dramatic transformation is there in the 'revolutionary techniques' of 'green revolution farming' provided that the inputs crucial to its functioning such as irrigation and fertilizers are seen to. The lynch-pin of the whole strategy, however, is seen to be a fundamental structural change — a genuine land reform which will give 'land to the tiller' instead of what has so far passed for land reform and in reality has been land *revenue* reform. The key is to give ownership to one-time tenants which will provide the basic incentive to increase productivity, at the same time that it destroys the feudal vestiges of wasteful land-owning patterns in India. The examples which inspire the project are Taiwan, the peasant farmers of Punjab and even China after liberation but before collectivization. The latter is seen as ideologically inevitable but 'economically unsound'.

The other central propositions are the formation of a 'bone structure' of roads and agri-centred market towns which would provide a 'rural-urban continuum' answering the problems of unemployment (through massive public works on soil conservation, land reclamation, irrigation, road-building and urban migration and congestion (through more even spatial development via these towns).

The prescription itself is essentially a combination of re-affirming the need for a capitalist transformation of agriculture on the basis of large-scale peasant proprietorship, with the 'socialistic' mobilization of the rural masses, who cannot be fully absorbed on the land itself, into productive employment in constructing the equally essential rural infrastructure.

The central weakness of 'development studies' of this genre, however, lie in their lack of a historical perspective. The successful introduction of capitalist agriculture in countries like Japan, U.S., France, England, Germany, etc., took place in a particular historical context, whereby either a successful political revolution took place overthrowing the power of the landed aristocracy (France, England) or else this aristocracy under pressure of survival from the more 'advanced' countries adopted capitalist farming. What is more, it was spaced out over time so that the problem of unemployment absorption was never so acutely posed. It is here that socialist China's experience which, however, cannot be divorced from its ideology of regimentation, if you like, is so salutary.

No such prospects exists here. It is the question of power that is crucial. To bring about the kind of transformation that is required, it would be necessary to *confront* and *break* the power of vested rural interests who continue to thrive from things as they are.

This is where one must disagree with Sudhir Sen. The key problem, therefore, is not only the formulation of the *infallible core* strategy. To that this book has made a thoughtful and valid contribution. It is above all the problem of political will and strength

to carry out such strategies. Alternative strategies by themselves mean little. Ironically enough, the problems of economic development at their core are profoundly political rather than academically economic.

A. Vanaik

**UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA: POLICY FOR
MANPOWER** by K. Puttaswamaiah. Oxford &
IBH Publishing Co

ALMOST thirty years of planned development has not succeeded in coming to grips with the unemployment problem, and its solution continues to baffle academics and planners alike. After many years of being an adjunct of a growth policy, which assumed that unemployment would automatically be eliminated once growth of the GNP was taken care of, it is a welcome development that employment has been given a central place today by both the government and the planners. Therefore, any work which attempts to shed light on this vexed question is welcome. However, Dr. Puttaswamaiah's book belies the promise held out by its title.

He sets out to analyse in eight chapters all aspects of the problem and deals respectively with the theoretical framework, the magnitude of the problem of agricultural, industrial and educated unemployment, the general employment situation in the country, rationalization, unemployment, and National Employment Services and solutions to overcome the malady after a 'critical appraisal of the five year plans'. For the discerning reader, however, there is very little analysis, original or otherwise, and the book is mostly a scissor and paste effort, the statistical and narrative material being culled from various sources and strung together. Even this could have been a useful contribution giving the undergraduate and lay reader a comprehensive overview of the past thinking on employment and unemployment, had the author cared to edit the material carefully and made sure of the accuracy of the data.

As it stands, however, the book is full of repetition, inconsistencies and inaccurate data which might confuse rather than enlighten the reader, apart from the fact that the book's language is rather poor. For example, what is one to make of 'Thus employment is not an equally clear cut conception. It is meant simply the number of man hours that exist over a period during which people are not employed, it would be so.' (p. 12)

The author has been able to compile a 196 page book, one feels, only because each fact or idea is stated about four times, sometimes not even in very different words, e.g., on page 20, he defines disguised unemployment and almost immediately on page 21, says almost the same thing, except in a more confused and inaccurate manner. To quote — 'the disguised unemployed are those persons who work

on their account and who are so numerous relatively to the resources with which they work, that if a number of them were withdrawn from work in the other sectors of the economy (?) the total output of the sector from which they were withdrawn would not be diminished even though no significant reorganization occurred in this sector and no significant substitution of labour.' (p. 21)

One can overlook repetition but glaring factual inaccuracies are more difficult to swallow. According to Puttaswamaiah, comparing the persons engaged in agriculture to the total labour force, the percentage decreased from 50.02 in 1951 to 14.27 in 1971! (p. 28). I was tempted to put this down to a misprint in the text, but the same figure occurs in table 2 (p. 30).

Again, according to him, out of every '100 cultivators, 61 persons are the agricultural labourers;' 'In the agricultural sector, the number of women employed is very less and it was only 13% when compared to the men.' Curiouser and curiouser!

Dr. Puttaswamaiah obviously believes in letting his mind wander where it will, for at one point he is talking of the proportion of the agricultural labour force to total workers according to the Census, and then suddenly jumps to the NSS figures of unemployed. He talks of agricultural unemployment, and then suddenly talks of life in the cities and the difficulties of being unemployed there. Census figures, NSS figures, Agricultural Labour Inquiry figures are all quoted, willy nilly, irrespective of the comparability, the relevance of the time periods, etc.

His solutions for increasing employment are those too well known already. Nowhere is there any evidence of the 'policy for manpower' promised by him in the title, except in a statement like, 'what is needed is a grim determination to embark on a policy of such outlay as would absorb the available manpower.' He prefers not to enlighten us as to what 'such outlay' should be.

If the above appears rather a harsh judgement of the book, it is because one expected so much more, considering the author's credentials and the testimonials from eminent economists cited on the cover. The book is priced at Rs. 50. Even at Rs. 5, the book would be overpriced.

Pushpa Sundar

**IRRIGATION PROJECTS IN INDIA: TOWARDS
A NEW POLICY** by K. Puttaswamaiah Nrusimha
Publications, Bangalore. 1977.

THE contents of this book are best described in the author's words 'Integrated area development and the spread of benefits to the weaker sections of the community are the main objectives. In this context, utilization of the local resources by micro planning for full employment is considered as the main stra-

tegy. Land and water resources should therefore be put to maximum use in such a way that give quick benefits to the people below the poverty line with least cost. In the past emphasis was laid on major and medium irrigation projects without much relevance to the cost factor and at the expense of all for the benefit of the people of a particular area. This has not helped as the returns on investments have been poor and far too at a distant period also. A change in our approach in the investment of funds on irrigation is thus needed. This monograph sets a policy direction for the future in the investment of funds on irrigation development.'

His objective is laudable, but not really fulfilled, in terms of empirical validation of the hypotheses and convincing arguments against the present policy of high level investment on medium and large irrigation projects. Apart from illogical statements, unconvincing arguments, highly unscientific methods of analysis, superfluous statements, often repeated sentences and arguments, and false generalizations, the book is full of printing mistakes and factual errors. Unfortunately, the author's only valid statements are obvious ones: whenever he is original he usually succeeds in being illogical.

Since our judgment is so harsh, it is only fair that we justify it in some detail.

The preface summarizes the book. The author says that by concentrating on small irrigation projects maximum benefit can be obtained with minimum cost. He says nearly half of the irrigation potential can be utilized by taking up minor irrigation works. According to him vast potential is unutilized at present. This is clearly wrong. On his own evidence (Table 7, page 22) the larger part of irrigation potential lies in medium and major works.

The second chapter is titled 'Criteria in appraisal of irrigation projects.' The author discusses briefly the evolution of the cost benefit analyses. He makes the familiar complaint that those so far developed are least relevant for large investment decisions because a major conceptual problem of subjecting public investment decisions to economic analysis lies in defining the government utility function. Only when this has been done is it possible to make our notions of benefits and costs sufficiently meaningful.

Chapter III is entitled 'Indian Agriculture — A Survey.' This is very badly written. These 2½ pages have merely a literal description of the tables that the author has given in the appendix to the chapter.

After this extraordinary survey of Indian agriculture in 2 pages, he gives us an alternative strategy in some 10 tautological sentences: according to him this should be such as to aim at maximum benefit with minimum cost and all water potential in India should be fully utilized.

Chapter IV is titled 'Demand and Accomplishment in Agricultural Sector.' The author makes a

comparative study of the growth of population and paddy production, and points out that the demand for food created by the growth of population has not been met thus making the objective of self sufficiency in food supply enunciated by the policy makers and planners a dream. Unfortunately, even this obvious truth has not been supported by the data given in his Table 5, where the compound rate of growth of rice was 3.01% in contrast to the population growth rate of 2.2% in India. Even on the all-crop basis, the growth rate he has shown is 2.92. Table 1 has many mistakes. e.g., he uses paddy production figures up to 1966, and rice production figures thereafter without probably realizing it, and he has calculated the indices on this basis. It is amazing that any serious work can contain the kind of error which is repeated in Table 2. Inevitably, the qualitative and quantitative conclusions are ridiculous.

Chapter VI is 'Investment and Returns.' The author mentions some of the direct and indirect benefits from irrigation projects, then goes on to classify irrigation works as productive or unproductive, according to whether the net revenue derived within 10 years from the date of completion of construction covers the annual interest charges on the capital invested. Most times, net revenue falls short of the cost, not because the project itself is not economically worthwhile, but political factors intervene.

Having done a terrible job of analysing investment irrigation in India, the author goes on to develop a new irrigation policy in Chapter VII. He says the lack of cost consciousness in major sectors of the economy like the medium and major irrigation projects among others hinder economic progress. The author mentions this four times on the same page. He also repeats many times that investments in the agricultural sector should be spread 'all over': a phrase he does not deign to explain. Then he talks about the advantages of minor and well irrigation, again in the most obvious and sometimes trivial sense. Essentially the new 'policy' that he proposes is that the investment should be thinly spread all over 'the region' to curb 'regional economic imbalances.' And it should have an accent on minor irrigation, with a proviso that the large and medium projects should also be taken up when the exchequer is 'having safe breathing.' Finally, he suggests that all irrigation projects costing more than 10 crores should be treated as projects of the Central Government.

There are three annexures (i) water rates (excerpts from *Economics of Irrigation* by Colin), (ii) systems of betterment levy and water rates in various States in India and (iii) tables.

It is difficult to imagine a more pointless, worse written, and more carelessly documented work.

R. K. Sampath

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES IN INDIA by Dr. R.K.
Gupta Sahitya Bhawan, 1978.

DR. Gupta's book is intended as a 'comprehensive textbook' on the Indian public sector, which would be of 'immense general interest, and particular interest to policy-makers'. His approach is marked by extreme analytical modesty, in that all pretensions to a consistent framework are abandoned from the start.

The opening chapter emphasizes the inevitability of the growth of public enterprise in the face of the decay of world capitalism, and the economic necessity for progressive State ownership. Gupta then points to the State in advanced countries such as the USA, UK, and Canada which he feels have been efficient and successful in pursuing policies of take-over of the entrepreneurial function in stimulating the economy for the benefit of private enterprise. Thus, it is difficult to see what the author considers as the rationale for public enterprise.

Dr. Gupta's main concern is obviously with the Indian situation. There is a general description of the growth of the public sector in India, with especial reference to the five year plans, and a brief overview of the performance and profitability of public enterprise. Here, also, Gupta seems unable to decide how to view the situation. He argues that the public sector is now 'in a pre-eminent position to ensure steady and balanced growth' (p 76) and is 'spear-heading' the post-1975 'economic resurgence' (p 84). However, Gupta later decides that 'the poor performance and low profitability of public enterprises have shattered the economy of the country.' (p 110)

The poor performance of the public sector is then explained in terms of various factors, all of which can be summarized by the lack of efficient management and the 'bureaucratic nature of managerial cadre'. This conclusion necessitates further prescriptive chapters which spell out what makes an efficient manager — 'professionalism' and 'motivation', which imply the need to give greater training and more adequate monetary and non-monetary incentives.

Before considering Gupta's main argument, one could examine what is lacking in his study: An analysis of the growth pattern of the public sector in terms of each industry and trends in specific industries is missing. The performance of the public sector is measured only by the yardstick of profitability: the other variables such as employment and additions to aggregate income as well as the efficiency in terms of unit cost of production (where prices may be controlled by public policy) have not been taken into consideration. More important (in a mixed economy), the linkages with the private sector have not been considered at all. There is the obvious and crucial role of public investment in creating demand for the private sector's products

and in providing the infrastructure and raw materials for private production. A detailed examination of existing and potential economic and technological linkages would have been useful. Also, a historical perspective on public investment and a comparison with other developing countries such as Egypt rather than developed western economies would have been more interesting.

It is now generally accepted that one important reason for the present economic crisis has been the gradual slowing down of public investment, a point which Gupta also makes. One could also point to some public enterprises which have not done well. However, Gupta cites lack of efficient management as the reason for all the above ailments. (To be fair to Gupta, he does refer to the problem of procedures, which hamper both the construction and operations of public enterprises, in particular because there are no such constraints on private enterprise. But he characterizes this problem as one of failure of 'management', which can at best be described as an over-simplification.)

No one disputes that bad management can be, and has been, responsible for the poor performance of some industrial units in given periods of time. This has happened not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. But it is completely misleading to generalize this to explain the fundamental problem of inadequate aggregate investment. One should, instead, look at the basic causes for the slowing down of public investment, which would also help to explain the inadequate development of public enterprises. For this, various other problems such as the nature and trend of government expenditure, fiscal policies, policies towards private enterprise as well as towards State undertakings, need to be examined in depth. Any discussion of public enterprises which seeks to explain their development essentially as a problem of management, in isolation from the broad framework of economic development, brings to mind the parable of the three blind men describing an elephant.

Jayati Ghosh

**PROMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF MONETARY
MANAGEMENT IN INDIA** by Vinay Kumar
Varma Somaiya Publications, Bombay, 1978.

THE traditional conception of monetary management (MM), with restricted emphasis on controlling the supply of credit in the interest of monetary and exchange stability, is inadequate to meet the developmental needs in a developing economy like India. The promotion of a high and sustained economic growth, and restraining the strong inflationary pressures generated by such a policy, brings a conflict between the objectives of MM. The success of MM depends on the simultaneous execution of promotional measures to ensure utilization of real resources in the most efficient way. These have added new dimensions to the role of monetary authority in

India. In this context, Dr. Vinay Kumar Varma reviews in this book, the functioning of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and its MM.

Dr. Varma has explained both the theoretical and practical aspects. Chapter I sets the permissible rate of monetary expansion in the perspective of the twin objectives of MM, namely, price stability and acceleration of the rate of the growth in the economy. It is concluded that two objectives tend to be competitive, especially in the short-run. In the long-run, they may be complementary. The permissible rate will depend upon the level of initial real income, the rate of growth of real income, the proportion of precautionary demand for money and the expansion of the monetized sector.

Allocation and permissible monetary resources is considered vital to MM in practice. Eligibility rules have remodelled the traditional lender of the last resort function of the RBI. This is discussed in Chapter II. While the preceding chapter broadly analyses the eligibility rules behind the allocation on credit, the next chapter brings into focus the various principles of selectivity criteria. It stresses the necessity for consistency among the various criteria and explains how those criteria resolve the conflict between the objectives of MM. Conventionally, credit-worthiness and repayment capacity were judged from the viewpoint of the existing financial standing of a party and the liquidity nature of the securities pledged for obtaining credit.

However, these criteria cannot be applied to certain sectors which have attained a higher priority in economic development. The security-oriented approach has come under heavy fire in recent years. A shift to lending based on 'credit-worthiness of purpose' and repayment capacity as revealed by feasibility criteria has been dealt with in detail in Chapter IV. The promotion and development of specialized credit institutions by RBI which are on a par with itself has become necessary in the context of the underdeveloped money market and capital market. Through this the monetary authority is able to wield a powerful influence over the lending activities of such institutions and integrate the term-credit flow plan priorities. This is analysed with adequate empirical data in Chapters V and VI.

The promotion of commercial banking alters the asset preferences and increases the degree of specialisation in economic activities. Credit supply by commercial banks energises economic activity. The tools of monetary authority in channelising the short term credit activities through the commercial banking sector are explained in Chapter VII. Mobilisation of the optimal amount of savings aids in reducing the conflict between objectives of stability and acceleration of economic growth. The central bank can make a significant contribution indirectly to mobilise savings in the economic system. This is well explained in Chapter 8. A summary of discussions and 'some' kind of a prognosis are presented in the concluding chapter.

Throughout the text, Dr. Verma has mostly attempted to explain the RBI's policies rather than evaluate them from a critical angle. For instance, he has nowhere observed that MM in India has been largely initiated and controlled by administrative measures rather than by the instruments which control the flow of real resources. To explain, conscious plan efforts necessitate fulfilment of certain physical and financial targets and MM is made merely instrumental in this process. He has not taken into account the administrative limitations of financial control in a partially planned, mixed economy, like ours.

Further, he has not dealt in detail with deficit financing by the RBI, which plays an important role in MM in India, in the discussion on the permissible rate of monetary expansion. While explaining the criteria behind credit allocation, the author could have profitably restricted the discussions on feasibility criteria and repayment capacity to their most essential details, so that their present length could have been considerably reduced. Though he has examined the nature of structural developments in MM, he has failed to bring out the inadequacy of the institutional set-up to promote structural development in Indian money and capital markets, which are still largely under-developed.

Moreover, he has not examined whether 'open' or 'repressed' is desirable in the implementation of monetary policy in the context of growth and price stability. The study seems to be more of historic interest than of current relevance as the data used mostly relate to 1960-71 and in some places even 1950-63.

Finally, while the author has succeeded in presenting a well presented and 'documented' reference on MM in India, he has not adequately satisfied the expectations of a critical analysis.

C S. Balasubramaniam

OVERDUES IN FARM COOPERATIVE CREDIT

by Dr. C.L. Dadhich Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1977.

THIS doctoral dissertation examines and analyses the nature and extent of overdues of agriculture cooperatives in the State of Rajasthan. The book gets off to a slow start with a general description of the agricultural cooperative movement in Rajasthan. The problem of overdues of agricultural cooperatives, it is pointed out, becomes highly serious and unmanageable when the quantum exceeds the owned funds of the institution. So long as the owned funds are more than the overdues, the shock of overdues can be easily absorbed and the flow of credit from the higher financing agency can also be maintained.

The major thrust of the finding seems to be that the percentage of overdues increased from 17 to 44

during the period 1955-56 to 1967-68. The rising trend had an adverse impact on the expansion of cooperative credit. Most of the overdues were found to have been outstanding for three years and more. A revealing feature was that a very small number of about 12 per cent of the membership had been borrowing continuously and the majority of the membership was sinking under heavy overdues. The latter therefore became ineligible to receive fresh finance. Another was that about 74 per cent of the borrowers diverted their loans towards re-lending, this was more common especially with members of managing committees of cooperative societies.

The author's analysis shows that in Rajasthan the entire owned fund has been engulfed by the overdues. The situation is such that investment of funds by people in the cooperative societies gets discouraged. When depositors and creditors know the worsening position of overdues, they immediately withdraw their deposits and this results in further impairment in the working capital of these institutions.

Amongst the causes for overdues are the unsound lending policies, ineffective supervision, lack of right type of leadership, failure of crops, lack of linking cooperative credit with marketing and so on. The author suggests some measures for preventing and checking overdues. For example, supervision should be improved and loan policies rationalised. As for the loaning procedures, a calendar of operations may be drawn up to cover the different stages.

The study, however, leads us into a blind alley as it were. It is an uncritical picture and the author often speaks through others — this committee and that report, this author and that authority. As a result, he frequently fails to establish a rapport with the readers. He must also face criticism for the numerous analytical miscues and the lack of elaboration of certain issues. These, however, need not distract from the real contribution of providing adequate information on one of the biggest maladies of our cooperative institutions.

The weakest link in the chain is the recommendatory portion. No concrete or substantial suggestions have been offered except for clichés dilating on the much-beaten track in an eclectic manner. The author would have had a creditable monograph if he had given some sound suggestions for solving the problem of overdues. He quotes the views of Emil Samuel Trouston and observes that 'farmers in India do not possess even the elementary knowledge of financial management and, therefore, it is futile to expect that they would follow the principles of farm finance as suggested by Emil Samuel.'

The book will be found useful by persons who are interested in the cooperative structure and its functioning in the country.

Navin Chandra Joshi

Underdevelopment to Developing Economies

Edited by S. P. SINGH

This collection of readings, a sequel to *The Economics of Underdevelopment and Accelerating Investment in Developing Economies*, explores various aspects of economic development common to most underdeveloped societies. The selections range from analyses of unemployment and stagnation in agriculture, and migration of labour to urban centres, to a critical examination of various theories of agrarian reform and growth in underdeveloped regions. Rs 85

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NARI RUSTOMJI

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as exemplified in the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva

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Communication

I HAVE read with much interest Seminar 227, *The Rural Challenge*, and I feel it is like looking at a village hole with an academic telescope mounted on an urban bastion. To understand rural problems, one has to live in a village, walk behind a pair of bullocks, winnow wheat in the May and June sun, suffer the stink of open air latrines, stagnant pools of water and swarms of flies and mosquitoes.

Every morning millions in our villages walk out of their homes with small pitchers of water to answer the call of nature and squat at the first convenient place, relieve themselves and walk away unmindful of their contribution to the filth of their environment. One often wonders that with the unlimited scope of communications provided by the transistor radio, why we don't utilize a bare five minutes of our broadcasting time daily to persuade people to acquire a scoop, or a hand hoe (Khurpi) and take it out with them every morning to dig a little hole in the ground, ease themselves into it and put the soil back to cover it up. They could be told that by adopting this routine they would be helping in converting the excreta into valuable manure and at the same time preventing the breeding of flies and other harmful insects and helping in preventing the spread of the foul smell. I am absolutely convinced that this approach will succeed in promoting environmental hygiene. But would some one listen, remains a big question mark.

As there are no fixed meal hours, to cater to the needs of her family members who saunter in at will to eat, the average housewife in a village has to cook for six long hours daily on her open brick and mud *choolah* (hearth). This method of cooking results in criminal waste of energy as only ten per cent of the heat generated by the fuel is utilized in cooking, the rest simply escapes into the atmosphere. Can we afford this waste in a country woefully short of fuel wood? Why can't we persuade our village folks to have fixed meal hours and help relieve the drudgery of their women folk? Can't we persuade, by the same token, our technocrats to improve the design of the village *choolah* to make

it a more efficient converter of energy. Is it asking too much? In Pakistan they are trying to solve the fuelwood shortage problem, through communal cooking by using Tandoors (earthen oven) but how can such a thing as communal cooking be even conceived of in a caste ridden society such as ours.

In the villages our labourers have been using the same *khurpi* (hoe) and *pharwa* (spade) for the last five thousand years. Their manhour output has remained static. How can any one hope to improve the economic condition of our villagers unless we can do something to improve their manhour productivity. Are our technocrats alive to their responsibility in improving conditions in this field. Our labourers in the villages work sitting on their feet and with primitive implements at their disposal, they are faced with the problem of the most inefficient conversion of their energy. We are producing hundreds of agricultural engineers every year, but what has been their impact on our rural economy?

The pity of it all is that our technocrats, once they land a job, become pen pushers to maintain the status quo. They don't have the quality administration and determination of venturing into the field of research, probing into fresh avenues of knowledge with a view to extending their horizons for the service of their nation and country.

Our urban oriented experts in our Planning Commission are advocating a slow down in farm mechanization, little realizing that a tiny State like Punjab because of mechanization attracts five lakh labourers from U P, Bihar, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir — mostly bullock economy areas, and they get twice the wages prevailing in their home States, simply because mechanization has improved the productivity and made possible better exploitation of land and water resources. Our politicians are mainly briefless lawyers who like arguing rather than doing something concrete and substantial.
H.S. Sandhu,
Rudrapur

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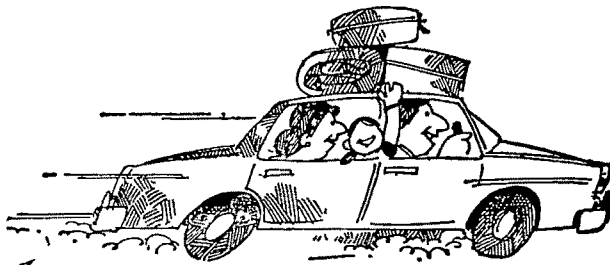
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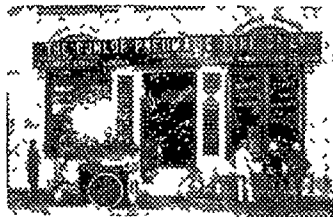
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The Dunlop story

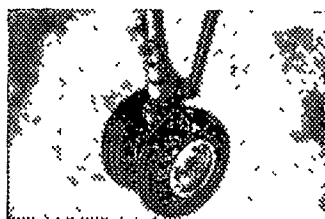
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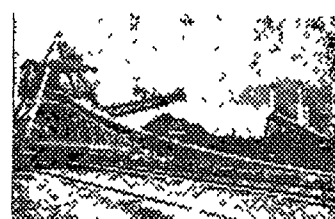
1898
The first pneumatic tyres were brought to India by Dunlop, only ten years after John Boyd Dunlop invented the pneumatic tyre in Belfast, Ireland. The first Dunlop office in India was opened in Bombay.



1936 First to set up manufacture of automotive tyres in India at Sahaganj, West Bengal



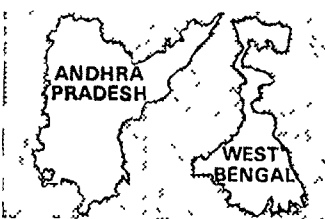
1942 First to manufacture aero tyres and tubes. Today Dunlop India makes tyres for every kind of aircraft flying in the Indian sky.



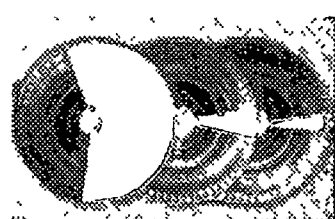
1953 First to manufacture rubber conveyor belting in large sizes



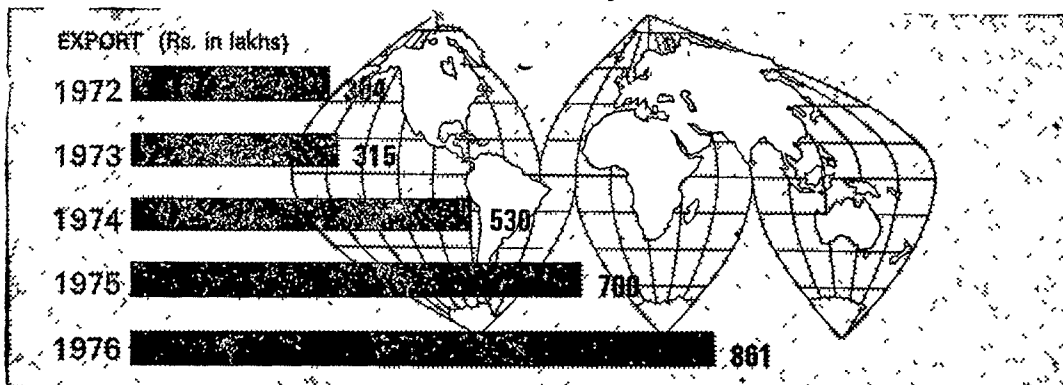
1967 First to develop military tank tyres



1973 Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal State Industrial Development Corporations signed technical collaboration agreements with Dunlop Limited, U.K. and Dunlop India Limited for setting up automotive tyres and tubes factories in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.



1974 Imported content of tyres reduced from 57% in 1960 and 62% in 1971 to 2.6%



1976 First tyre company to earn Rs 86 crores from exports. 95 countries appear on the export list of Dunlop India.

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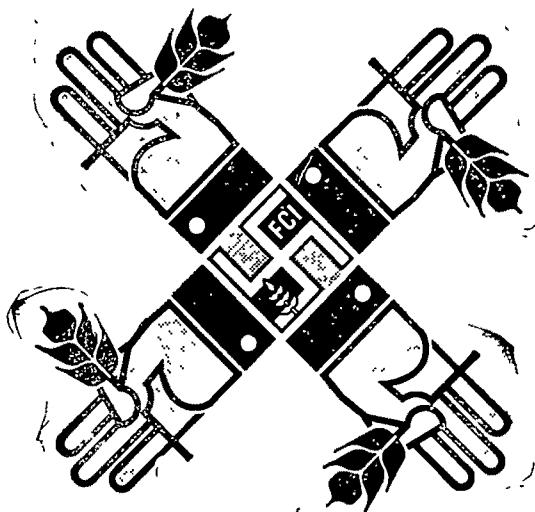
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Every month, we announce the theme of the next issue. This appears opposite the contents page. We have decided to request readers to send in their views on the problem under discussion. These should be typed and range from 500 to 1000 words. We look forward to a good and creative response. We hope there will be no inhibitions about writing in a serious journal.

Romesh Thapar

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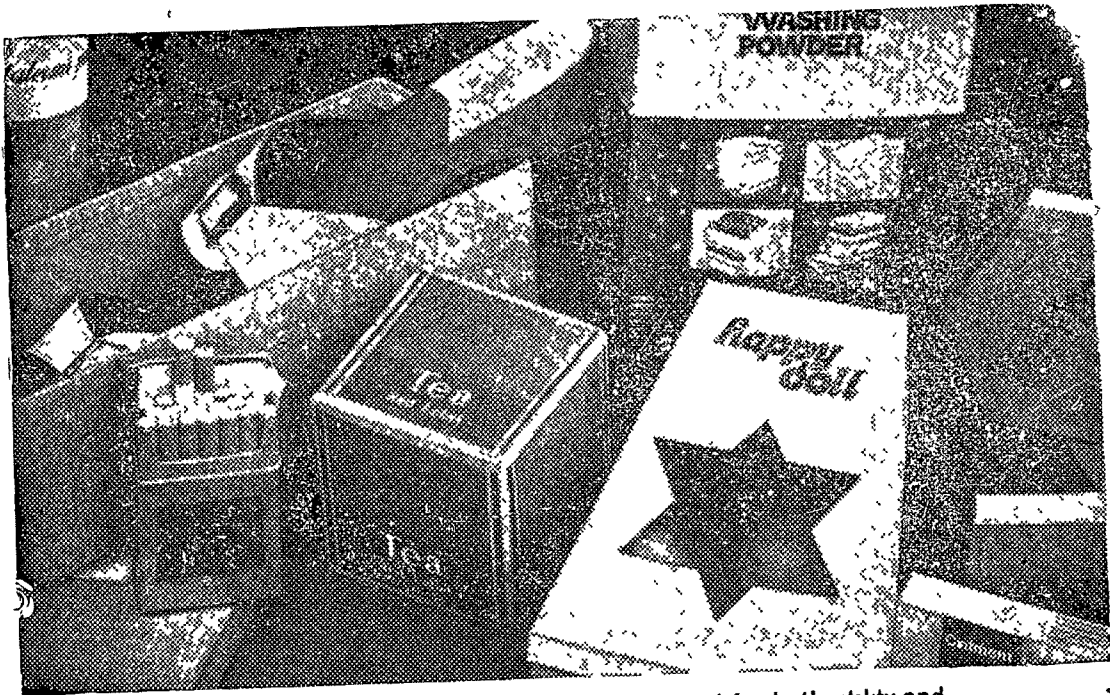
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September 1978

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Dialogues

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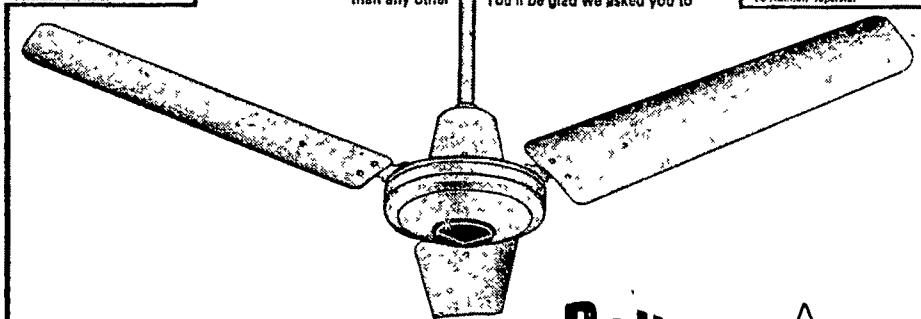
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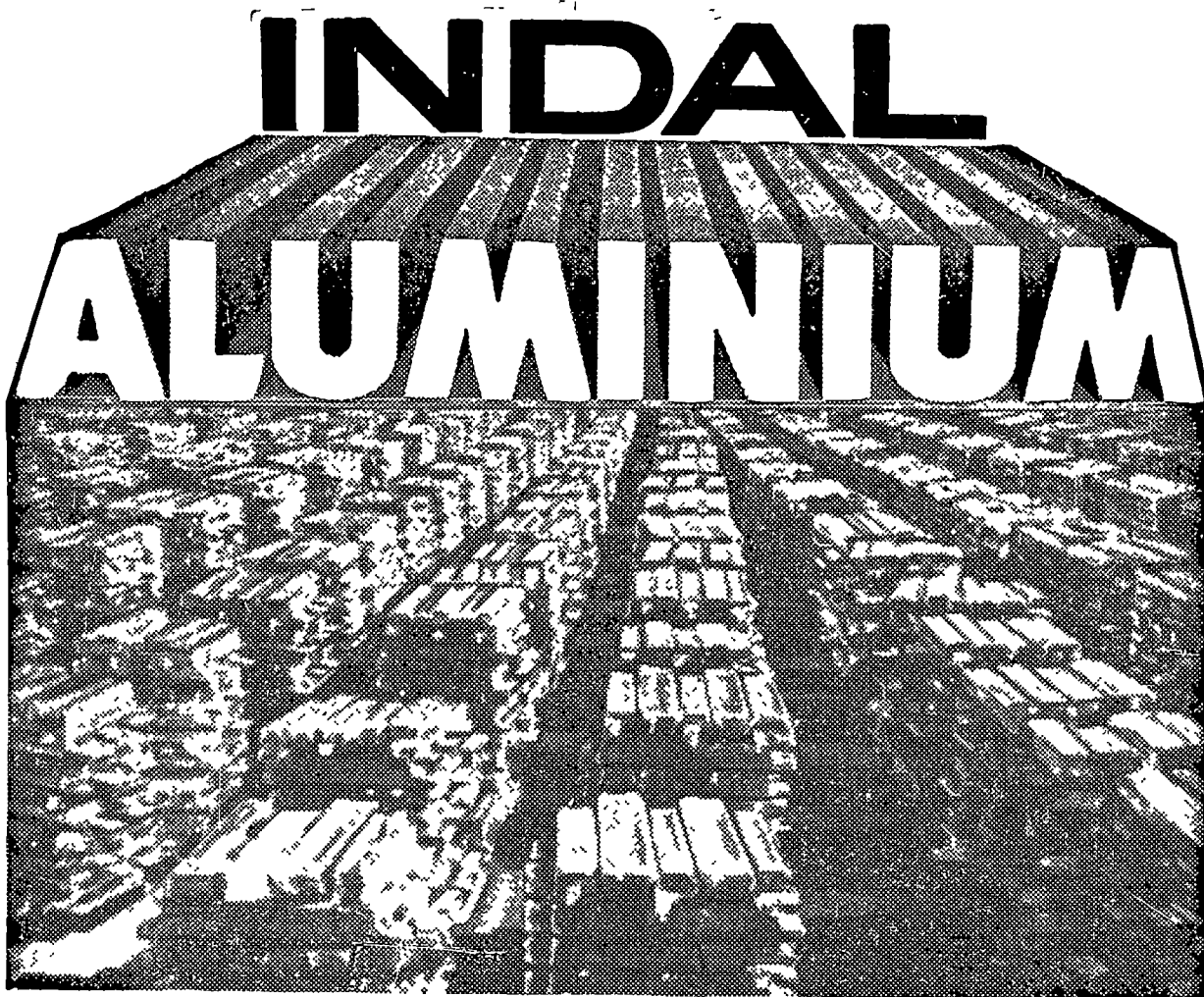


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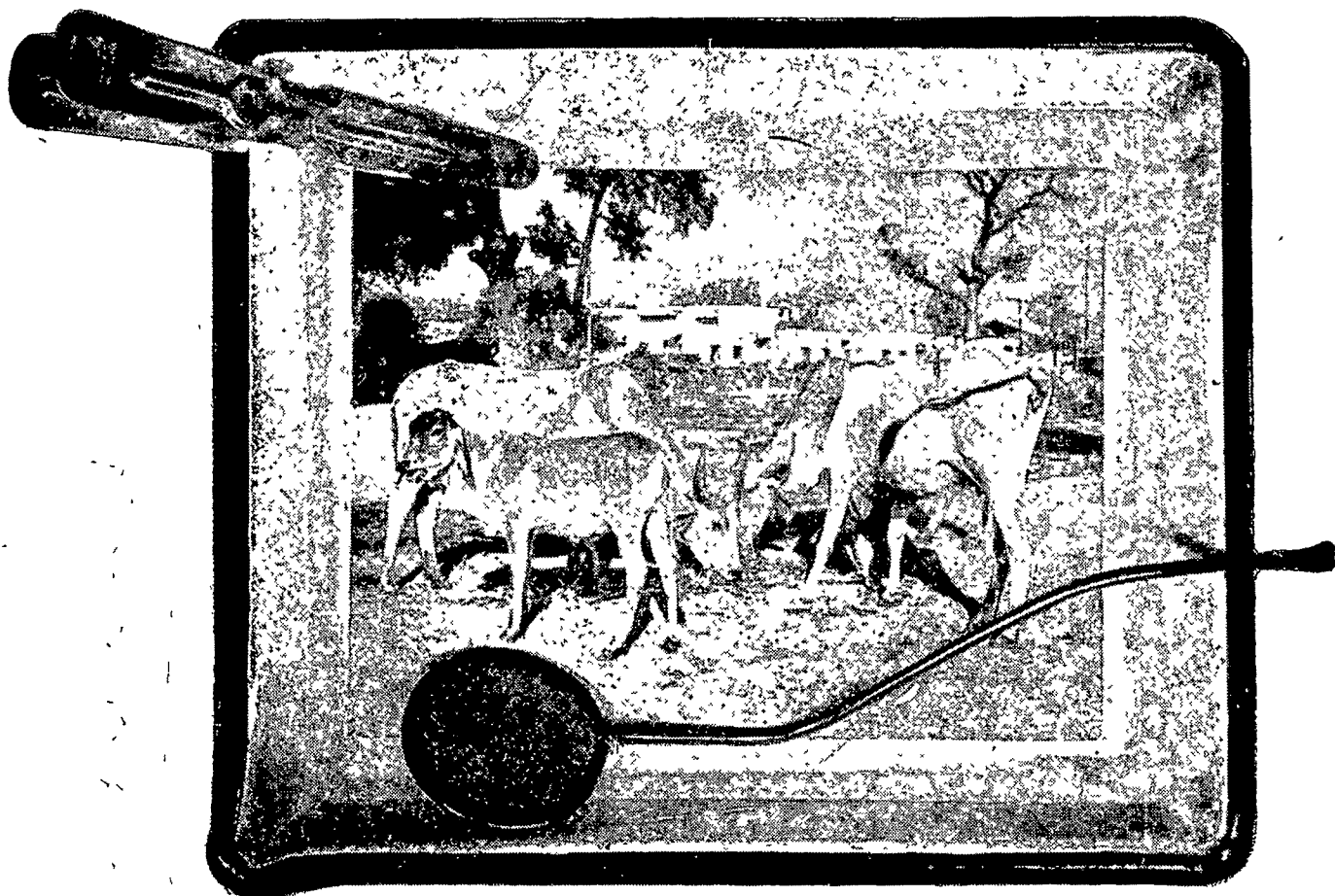


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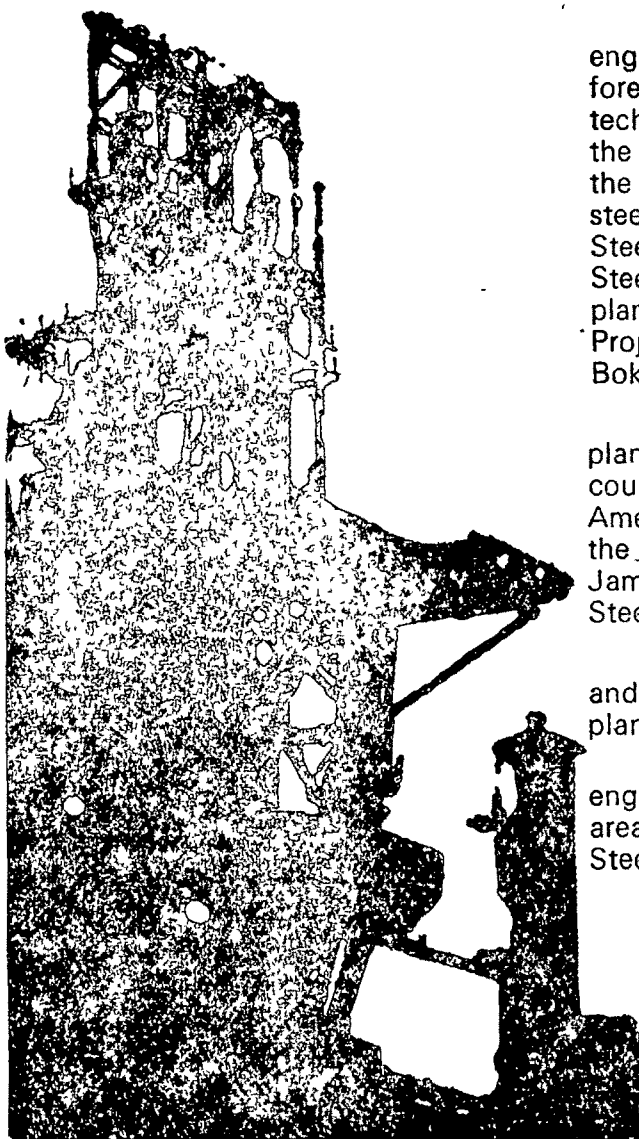


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NEXT MONTH : THE ADMINISTRATOR

229

NEW DIALOGUES

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fresh thinking
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symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of the
issues involved

MANKIND AT THE CROSSROADS

Aurelio Peccei, founder and President of
the Club of Rome

THE OTHER SOCIETY

Sugata Dasgupta, teaching at
the Department of Social Work,
University of Queensland, Australia

WHAT AND FOR WHOM?

Basu John, Chief Design Engineer,
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THE DEMOCRATISATION OF POWER

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and Rudolf Gyan D' Mello

COVER

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The problem

So many qualitative changes are taking place in our world today that it has become necessary to probe these new realities and to find relevant, even challenging, answers to the problems which have taken recognisable shape or are crystalising. A great part of our individual and collective anxiety is rooted in our inability to break from the established ground rules of thinking, the rigid *status quo* which either repeats familiar crises in different forms or negates the effort to launch new initiatives. We are for ever

speaking of environments, but little is heard of the environment of fixed and rigid notions which destroys every new mutation. And, yet, our future lies very definitely in those new mutations. This issue of SEMINAR is a gathering together of some ideas which seem pertinent to the problems of today. They are not directly related to each other but appear to throw light on some of the dark areas which have escaped the model-makers. We attempt this effort every now and then in the hope that it will spark fresh thinking.

Mankind at the crossroads

AURELIO PECCEI

AT this advanced stage of human evolution, our destiny seems to be governed by the interplay of two quite recent and extraordinarily dynamic macrophenomena. One is the scientific and technological revolution which gives us undreamt of knowledge and power, if not wisdom, and the other is the unexpected complexification of our world, which confronts us with enormous tangles of problems

Ever since the time of its formation in 1968, the Club of Rome has stressed that the cross-impact of these dominant factors would lead to a period of extreme alternatives. Unprecedented human fulfilment and ultimate catastrophe

are both possible. What the outcome will actually be, though, depends on a third major — and decisive — factor: our understanding and behaviour on the global plane.

Ten years ago, the mood was still one of great expectations. Now, after an eventful decade, it appears not only that the world situations have substantially deteriorated but also that adverse trends are steadily gaining ground. True, the techno-scientific enterprise has continued to progress on so many fronts; but its conquests are neither systematic nor coordinated, and all too often originate new problems; meanwhile, still other problems of a political, social and psychological

character keep emerging, and all of them intertwine, so that the overall human condition becomes ever more difficult.

The perception that the current general crisis is going to get worse before it can eventually be turned around is, however, blunted by our reluctance to face up squarely to unpleasant realities. We prefer to trust in the miracles of science and technology, and even believe in the promises of politicians, the art of diplomacy and the beneficial effects of international declarations and resolutions, rather than make the effort of assessing the situation thoroughly and comprehensively. Whatever evaluation or forecasts we undertake, they are just sectoral, fragmented or short-term. Never is our vast assortment of resources mobilized across disciplines and boundaries with a view to pursuing common, global goals.

As a consequence, we are all pitifully unprepared to cope with the formidable challenges and threats looming ahead. Although such a bitter reality is seldom recognized, it is high time we understood at least two essential things.

One is that mankind as a whole is striding rapidly towards a momentous crossroads where there can be no place for mistakes. Yet, its values, institutions and bearing are still a reflection of the past and certainly cannot carry it safely into the future. That something fundamental is wrong with its entire system is quite evident—for even now it is unable:

to assure the minima of life to all its members,
to be at peace with itself,
to be at peace with Nature.

The second is mankind's desperate need to break this vicious circle, while it can still get free and mould its future.

The consideration of a few facts and trends suffices to warn us that many danger points lie just ahead. The major single problem is global over-population — due to modern man's incapacity or unwillingness to control his own runaway num-

bers. According to the population clock of The Environmental Fund of Washington, the world's inhabitants reached 4.4 billion at 3.42 p.m. on 9 July 1978, and every year sees 73 million more people, concentrated especially in poor countries. Even if fertility is somewhat checked, the 'additional mankind' existing on this planet by the year 2000 will equal the total population at the time of World War I.

This demographic pressure is subjecting the human system to new, unbearable burdens when its condition is already critical. More than one third of its population is living beneath the poverty line (see Table I) and there can be no doubt that a no lesser proportion of its future children will be condemned to share the same fate even before they are born. None the less, there is much charitable talk about basic human needs but no earnest drive at the very roots of this knot of problems, to eradicate hunger, deprivation and ignorance from the world, once and for all.

For instance, there are no long-term plans to settle the new waves of population decently, yet, merely to build the physical infrastructure

of the human habitat required before the end of the century — houses, schools, hospitals, whole cities, roads, harbours, factories, etc., — entails a construction job similar to the one mankind has taken from the Middle Ages to complete. In itself this would be a colossal enterprise, tantamount to founding a 'second world' in a couple of decades, but lack of foresight will make it well-nigh impossible, while producing untold new problems and suffering.

Neither are their reliable plans or even ideas on how to find work for the 300 million able bodied men and women currently employed, or how to create the 1,000 million more jobs which are indispensable during the '80s and the '90s. Unemployment, which is always a human tragedy, particularly for young people, and a shameful blot on society at this macroscopic scale evidences the shaky foundations of the world order — and will eventually bring it to its knees.

Not even the proud industrial nations of the West know how to absorb their 16 million jobless and at the same time check inflation. The task is urgent because of the lengthening shadows of stagflation,

Table I

THE WORLD'S POOR, 1976

IN TOTAL WORLD POPULATION OF 4 BILLION

UNDERNOURISHED

(i.e. Below suggested Calorie/Protein Levels) 570 million

ILLITERATE ADULTS

800 million

CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

250 million

NO ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE MEDICAL CARE

1,500 million

LESS THAN \$90 INCOME PER YEAR

1,300 million

LIFE EXPECTANCY BELOW 60 YEARS

1,700 million

INADEQUATE HOUSING

1,030 million

Source

Center for Integrative Studies
University of Houston

protectionism and social unrest. The usual recipe is given: expand productive investment and raise annual growth to five per cent. It should however be clear by now that, for all their endeavours, most nations are up against so many constraints that they find it impossible to apply such simplistic prescriptions. The obstinacy with which old, ineffectual, if not counterproductive, schemes are nevertheless upheld confirms that the entire thought process needs a good overhaul even in the developed countries, rather than just the economic system alone.

More generally, in the international arena there reigns that 'great disorder under heaven' which Chairman Mao used to denounce. No wonder this occurs. Still rampant is the principle of territorial sovereignty which was affirmed in the Peace of Westphalia which in 1648 brought to an end the Thirty Years' War and feudalism. Most things have changed in these three and a half centuries — except our basic political philosophy. Then, people crossed Europe on foot or horseback and used oil lamps to read. Now, we have supersonic airplanes and see the world on satellite-monitored TVs. But the functional unit of the world polity is still that same sovereign national State of yesteryear.

Nationalism, dictatorships, militarism and racism thrive in the name of this sovereignty, while the aspirations of minorities are trampled underfoot. And this partitioning of the world among introvert, self-righteous sovereign entities — now numbering more than 150 — contrasts sharply with the reality of interdependence, thus causing the entire system to be ungovernable, and kills the spirit of world solidarity without which there can really be no future. Such a divided humanity can never be at peace with itself.

Besides the Marxist revolution, attempts have been made three times during this century to reorganize the world system, but each has failed. The last time, after World War II, saw the creation of the United Nations and its agencies; but even this has proved inadequate

The demand for new reforms is almost as widespread as society's ills.

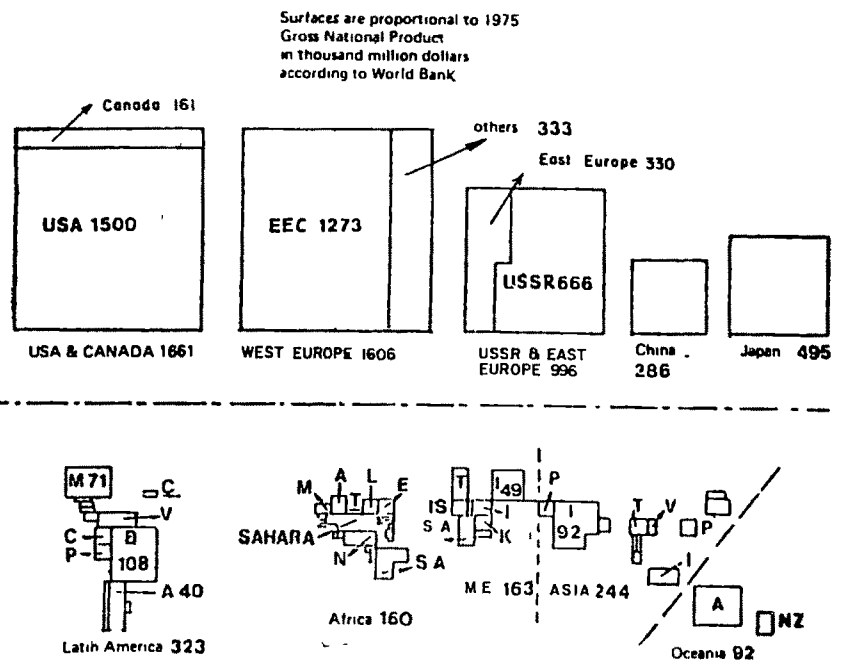
The syndromes of the profound global malaise are quite evident. For one thing, the North-South cleavage is widening. It divides the world even more drastically than the ideological and political walls which separate East and West, and, short of quite radical measures, it will prove unbridgeable. Commanding 80 per cent of the world's wealth and trade, over 90 per cent of the industry and services and nearly 100 per cent of the institutions of research, the human groups of the North have grown to such gigantic dimensions that they can dominate the world by sheer weight. The South — atomized in more than one hundred economically uncompetitive countries unable to coalesce stably (see Table II) — is no match for them.

There is not even a real North-South dialogue aimed at doing away with these crippling imbalances. Only the South has defined its posture, if somewhat rhetorically, focussing on the imperative of a more equitable and sustainable international order. The northern democracies instead seem committed to a policy of *status quo-ism*, aimed at averting change by rear-guard or delaying actions — which in the long run is no policy at all. And the socialist countries try to keep aloof from any negotiations, as if the reordering of the world system were none of their business. The result is a situation of stalemate which paralyses the human system precisely when it is rushing towards chaos and conflict.

Another pathological symptom is the fact that peoples and nations seeking security are, instead, just being lured on by a mirage. The

Table II

THE 5 POWERS OF THE NORTH AND THE 114 COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH



Source
Maurice Guernier
The Club of Rome

world is transformed into an armed camp, and a frantic arms race is spreading from the great powers to scores of other countries, including the poorest. Fear, unreason and shadowy interests prevail everywhere.

The nuclear overkill capability has attained demential levels, the entire world population can now be wiped out twelve times over. Two-thirds of the non-nuclear countries have recently imported major weapons. Yet, nobody seems satisfied. Almost half the world's scientists are engaged in 'defence' projects, and the annual military expenditure is approaching 400 billion dollars — a record of more than one billion dollars a day. 'The world' — said President Carter at United Nations — 'spent last year (1976) 60 times as much equipping each soldier as we spent educating each child'.

Another breakthrough in both strategic and conventional armaments is thus in the offing, while the unremitting horizontal proliferation of nuclear technologies is expected to make a nuclear conflict almost inevitable. Under these conditions, peace and disarmament cannot be the product of any treaty, entente or conference if first they do not find a place in the hearts and minds of people — especially now that the frightening escalation of civil violence is corroding society from within.

Humans are not even at peace with nature — in this, they are destined to lose disastrously in terms of habitat, health and quality of life, if not the very capacity for survival. The major problem is not, as generally thought, the depletion of the non-renewable resources. Although overexploited, these can still be found in respectable quantities in the earth's crust and oceans. Moreover, technology is at its best when the question is that of saving or substituting materials. Nevertheless, some resources are becoming physically scarce, or more expensive to extract or process, and hence more energy-consuming.

On the border-line, lie energy and soil — matters of great concern

For energy, the situation is expected to stiffen greatly due to oil shortfalls sometimes during the '80s, before safe, acceptable alternative energy sources are sufficiently developed to take over. Once wars were waged in quest of salt, now energy is the salt of the economy, and the economic, political and military consequences of an energy crunch are unfathomable. Here we have the Achilles' heel of contemporary society — as emerges clearly from a Club of Rome study about to be published.

Soil — just a minor part of the land mass which occupies about one-third of the world's surface is essential inasmuch as it combines the physical and biological elements required by life. But good soils, too, are becoming scarcer. The best ones are already being exploited, and precious croplands are degraded or eroded away almost as a routine by agricultural and water mismanagement, while pastures are destroyed by overgrazing. It is estimated that in the United States — the world's largest granary — topsoils are being lost eight times faster than they are being formed, and that at this pace by the year 2000 increased domestic consumption may well absorb all food produced in the country.

The new settlements needed to accommodate a swelling population will inevitably gravitate around cultivated areas, swallowing up yet more of them. Moreover, mostly due to human activities, deserts are advancing. They are already threatening one-tenth of South America, one-fifth of Asia and Africa and one-fourth of Australia.

The gravest dangers, however, concern the so-called renewable resources, and in the front line stands the progressive degradation of the world's biomass on which human life itself depends. One example is the reckless destruction of the tropical rain forests which evolved in a stable State for tens of millions of years to constitute the most complex congregation of plant and animal life in existence. Now, forty per cent of them have already been razed, while the remainder are being burned or cut down at the

rate of 20 hectares a minute — equalling the combined territorial area of Denmark, Holland and Belgium every year. Unless this orgy of destruction is slackened, they will practically disappear in three or four decades — paralleling the practical drying up of oil fields, but with far more severe consequences for mankind.

Yet another example is the accelerated extinction of animal and plant wildlife. Species after species is being ruthlessly eliminated by man. This massacre (see Table III) is coupled with the final liquidation of the remaining pockets of wilderness — the very heart of nature.

Whether moved by greed or caprice, negligence or ignorance, modern man employs his science and might to kill and corrupt everything that life took billions of years to create and perfect. Even if this wanton and stupid behaviour had no consequences on his own existence, it would remain an insult to his vaunted humanity and will inflict an irreparable cultural loss on the generations to come.

This is the chain of cold facts and actual trends we are witnessing at this fateful threshold to the future. They are of such a magnitude and nature and their interactions so critical that everything human is upset and made immensely more complex and hazardous. But, not only can the difficulties become overwhelming; they are also part of a situation totally new in human experience.

Since *homo sapiens* emerged, upwards of ten thousand centuries ago, down to the hundred or so centuries of recorded history, time and again man has had to face supreme tests and trials. Scores of empires, civilizations, lineages and even races have disappeared from one part of the earth or another. But man, as a species, continued his ascent. Now that he has risen to absolute stardom in the planet, the dangers too are global, and can result in the total eclipse of his kind. On the other hand, though, and for the first time, man has the means of becoming almost absolute master of his own destiny.

Table III

SPECIES EXTINCT OR THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION

SPECIES	DISAPPEARED DURING LAST CENTURY	DISAPPEARED DURING THIS CENTURY SO FAR	THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION
BIRD	75	53	345
MAMMAL	27	68	200
AMPHIBIAN/ REPTILE	?	?	80
PLANT	?	?	20/25 000

EXTINCTIONS ARE ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG
MANY MORE SPECIES ARE BEING DEPLETED SEVERELY,
PROBABLY BEYOND LEVELS FROM WHICH THEY CAN
RECOVER

Source
World Wildlife Fund
International Union for
Conservation of Nature

Three basic questions are thus forced upon us.

- How much time has humanity got to come to its senses and set itself on a safer course?
- Who has the capacity to propose and initiate this new course?
- What in essence must be done to make it materialize?

If the analysis of the downtrend of human fortunes just made is substantially correct, then the time available to change the system and choose another course is decidedly short. A reasonable guess is that, at the present tempo of events, there are probably less than ten years left before certain options which we may still have today will be irremediably lost.

For Americans, this means that the time during which mankind should take the road of renewal hardly goes beyond their next presidential term. For the Soviets, this time frame coincides with the 10th and 11th five-year plans (1976-1985). For western Europe, it is less than half of the period the European Community let go by since the Treaty of Rome without

reaching economic or political unity. For the United Nations, it is the Special Assembly of 1983 on the Third Development Decade which should set the pace. Altogether, there is no period of grace for mankind. It would be most imprudent, possibly fatal for it to bank on a longer respite.

Unquestionably, the protagonists of this epochal change must be the people at large — citizens of all parts of the world. The great religions and all spiritual, secular and ideological movements whose aim is the good of man should take a leading role in it. And all other social actors — schools, universities and academies, business communities and labour unions, professional associations, scientists, artists and the intelligentsia, political parties, youth groups and even counterculture — can and must contribute jointly or severally. A special role should be played also by the thickening network of cities and townships which is a cardinal structure of the future world.

The yeast of change does exist — although scattered — in the myriad spontaneous groupings of people springing up here and there, like the antibodies in a sick organism.

They are the peace movements, population policy societies, ecologists, women's lib, defenders of minorities, of human rights, of civil liberties, social workers, amnesty apostles, non-violent reformers, conscientious objectors, world federalists, consumer advocates, etc.

However, despite the need for a vast popular base and its eminently ethical and existential character, the movement for world renewal must be conceived in practical political terms, at the highest organized level. Therefore, for the time being, the major responsibility rests inescapably with governments. They have the power and rule the world; but unless they abandon national parochialism, the global human drama will drift into tragedy.

To avert this is their highest responsibility. Can the impending summit meeting of the West dodge it? Can the non-aligned and the socialist countries ignore this fundamental issue at their meetings scheduled for this summer? Should not the 'agenda for mankind' have top priority in all international gatherings from now on? Literally, hundreds of millions of people know that we are in a period of global emergency and expect of governments an act of global leadership.

The West, though, has a greater moral duty and a greater direct interest to respond promptly to this call. It was the West which opened the path that held the promise of stupendous developments — a path now revealing itself to be so risky. And it is the West which stands out with its unparalleled capacity for mustering up in freedom a formidable wealth of information, knowledge and experience, plus extraordinary intellectual, material, and organizational resources. Does not this then place on it an overriding historical obligation — that of conceiving and proposing to the other groups a grand design for the future of humanity? It is the West, too, that has more to lose by inaction. Should it not then take such an initiative for self-interest, if for no other reason?

The overriding goal is to produce a mature, responsible, self-governing

and well-managed global community which — while preserving cultural identities and social dynamics — should give the conscience of the species precedence over national and class conscience. The process will no doubt be long, tortuous and painful, but it is certainly within the realms of the possible — if we all accept a few basic guidelines

To start with, we must recognize that it is a vital necessity to re-establish satisfactory and sustainable equilibria, both within the human system and in its relations with nature. There is in this an overarching nexus of shared interests uniting all nations, whatever their economic condition or political regime — for they all need, ultimately, to abide by global imperatives of social justice and good earthkeeping. The developed countries should do this by adopting much more realistic and austere modes of life, and the developing ones by bringing into practice the spirit of self-reliance not as an individual virtue, but as their joint effort, at least regionally.

We must further admit that it will be nevertheless impossible to move to a higher level of human organization without a modicum of global planning. Having become the major agent of change on earth, man can no longer count on the automatisms upon which he used to rely in the past, such as the regenerative capacity of Nature, the market's 'invisible hand', and the checks and balances inherent in simple democratic systems. Yet, since global coherence is ever more necessary, he must provide for it himself — by concerted forward planning.

The solution certainly cannot be sought in any form of centralized planning which would soon engender a monstrous world-girdling and no doubt inefficient bureaucracy. A new kind of planning of a global scope, yet adaptable to a variety of local conditions, is one of those major social inventions and innovations which have become indispensable in our age — much more so than any further techno-scientific progress. A Club of Rome-sponsored

project has proposed a set of ingenious and flexible planning and decision-making instruments which are now being tested in many countries — and which may be a first step in the right direction.

But even all this is not enough. The shocking discovery we have yet to make is that, for all his science and might and all his plans, structures, systems and tools, modern man cannot change his fate if he himself does not change. Man's greatest problems and possible salvation lie in fact within himself. He has created his own, man-made world, where everything interacts with everything else at ever higher levels of complexity, thereby radically altering the natural flows of life on the planet, including his own life. But culturally and behaviourally he is lagging behind. A 'human gap' is thus created, which endangers his existence — no less than mutations in the environment endanger the existence of every species which is unable to adjust to them.

Our condition is of course different, but only in that the human brain — a unique resource — has still a great latent potential to be harnessed. Here is the new frontier, the deciding factor of our collective destiny. This will depend essentially on whether or not we are able to learn fast enough how to develop this untapped human potential — for it alone can move humanity to make a quality jump comparable to the one it engineered in its universe.

In its most ambitious project, The Club of Rome is now exploring this primary field of 'human learnability'. The preliminary conclusions are guardedly positive — though a note of caution must be added if we fail on this count, we will inexorably fail on all the others. The great step is then for all of us, and specially for those who command knowledge and power, to realize that — if we will it — ahead lies not catastrophe but the best part of the human venture. The key-stone is the full development of the human being — the human revolution which can guide and crown all other revolutions of our time.

The other society

SUGATA DASGUPTA

THE 'development' elite¹ suffered a traumatic experience at the end of the sixties. It was the time when the first development decade of the United Nations was coming to a close and certain basic hypotheses on which the decade was based were exploded. The assumption that was thus challenged by the findings of the decade was that 'development' could remove poverty. The facts proved that the assumption was not valid,² for the process of 'development' had itself created poverty in the areas of development. It had widened the gap between the rich and the poor and led to the emergence of internal colonies³ in each developing nation. The dream that the poor countries would in course of time become 'like' the developed 'welfare' States of the industrialised world could, in this context, well be given up!

The psyche of the 'welfare'⁴ elite of the industrialised countries today

Supporting data for most of the statements made in this article will be available, among other sources, from the *New Internationalist* (London, U.K., August 1976, No 4), *Time Magazine* (New York) dated 8 February 1971 and dated 29 August, 1977.

1 By 'development elite' I refer to all those who are devoted to the task of 'development' of the third world.

2 For a fuller treatment of the theme see my *Peace Research in the Third World* (Shanti Prakashan, New Delhi).

3. The concept of internal colony is fairly well known. 'Exploitation' in the case of internal colony is a built-in device of the system.

4 By 'welfare' elite, I refer to all those who are devoted to the promotion of 'welfare' in the North and West, i.e.,

faces a similar trauma. For, there has not only been a setback in the promise of a 'welfare' haven, but there are reasons to believe that this dream too, like the dream of development, may now well be given up. Some on the facts or realities that would substantiate such a position are mentioned below.

The Welfare State seems to be collapsing⁵. The areas of deprivation are increasing, and as certain poverty pockets of the richer nations fast approach the level of the absolute poverty of the third world, a new phenomenon becomes visible within the framework of the 'nation' society itself. The thesis that 'poverty' will gradually disappear from rich nations has, it seems, also been exploded in this context. Poverty, systemic poverty, has, on the other hand, become a structural necessity. What is worse is that it is the developed countries that, contrary to expectation, are approaching the economic and social status of the developing societies rather than the latter becoming a replica of the former. A third world⁶ is thus growing in each of the affluent societies and tends to expand in size with every well-meaning effort of the welfare elite to pull in the opposite direction.

The profile that emerges is depressing. The rich nations live, it in the industrialised, modern, affluent societies

5. Vide President Carter's recent pronouncements. His plea is to 'scrap welfare' (*Courier Mail*, 19 August, 1977).

6 Vide the *New Internationalist* referred to earlier.

seems, in two societies: a large part of that social system which comprises a majority of people works well. The 'indexed' wages, social services, employment plans, education, recreation, the excitements of affluence, as in Australia, tend to create an equitarian society. Jack here, as the saying goes, is as good as his master. The earning differential is not more than say 1 3 50. All this is true of those who comprise the 'in' system. But there is an 'out' system too, the other society, as I choose to call it. This also is the new phenomenon mentioned earlier. It has the following features

First a word about its composition. The people on welfare comprise the other society. The latter does not, in the U.S.A. for example, comprise only 'blacks' or the traditional categories of the deprived, e.g., the lone parent, the big family, the aged, the aboriginals, the migrants, the uneducated, etc. The scenario is changing, and the 'out' system includes today the people of the mainstream for whom, at least, the affluent society was supposed to be tailored. Fifty-eight per cent of people on dole, in the United States, are whites. The average size of the family on dole is about four, which is no different from the size of an average American family. Even engineers and other professionals who once enjoyed the status of the upper elite in the society are increasingly going on welfare. The 'trauma' of this 'climb down' seems to be more racking than that of being in poverty from the very beginning.

People who go on welfare mostly remain on welfare. They are more or less permanently excluded from the 'in' system and form a sub-culture of their own. The situation persists in the next generation too. It means that the people who enter the society that stands outside the system, or those who leave the 'in' system, are condemned to 'dole' or to the life of deprivation from generation to generation. The two systems are thus more or less mutually exclusive.

The people who man the 'out' system are without work. Since 'employment' provides a common

institution for all people of the 'in' system, the people who are excluded from the latter do not only go without work, they tend, in course of time, to become anti-work. Since 'employment' provides the major value of the people who man the 'in' system and since the latter look down upon (the words used are 'to stigmatise') those who do not have jobs but manage to eke out a living through 'doles' the incumbents of the 'out' system retaliate in turn. They reject the values of the 'in' system. Glorifying 'dole' bludging, 'work dodging', looting and violence (as in New York in the dark night. The voice is raised now why not try it in the day?) the incumbents of the 'out' system tend to develop a counter-culture of their own. Alienated from the main society, they often turn against the 'system'.

The 'in' system reacts by keeping the people of the 'out' system under constant surveillance through a network of 'welfare' functionaries. Thanks to a style of life in which privacy of the home is no longer respected, the people of the other society, though not living in a 'ghetto' or 'reservation', are kept as virtual prisoners in their own homes. They thus live with a sense of helplessness and insecurity of their life which would easily distinguish them from others who enjoy all the rights and liberties of a citizen. This is one group of people, then there are others, the 'derelicts' and 'pollutants to the eye' whose physical contact a normal citizen may like to avoid.

What does the other society look like? Does it look like a 'caste' whose frontiers are guarded by rules and boundaries? The physical structure of the 'out' system is easily recognisable. It is made up of garbage heaps, broken furniture, dingy ovens, old garments, soaked carpets, and a cold environment (60°F) not mitigated by any heating facilities. These are mouldering neighbourhoods ruled by hopelessness, drugs, arson, unemployment and fear' (*Courier-Mail*, 10 October, 1977).

The 'norms' that define the 'out' system and protect the boundaries of the other society are derived

from what, in the U.S.A., are called the 'notched' effect. Welfare laws and the rules of social security (called 'S.S.' by a British community organiser) that keep them confined to the 'out' system for generations include many superimposed behaviour patterns. They include legislations such as those which discourage an unemployed person from joining an educational institution to remove his handicap for the fear of starvation as one may well lose his 'dole' if he becomes a student. A wife estranged from her husband would similarly make no effort toward a reunion as she may lose the benefits due to a deserted person.

It is not only the rules of the 'S.S.' that keep the numbers locked in the 'out' system, but the rationale of the whole society helps to do so. A certain percentage of unemployment is not only considered necessary to keep the 'in' society in employment, but with every increase in wage and standard of living there is an increase in the number of the unemployed. Whereas it is the goal of the affluent society to go on increasing the economic standard of the 'in' system, and whereas the 'resources' are becoming increasingly scarce day by day, the number of people who agree to live on the 'dole' is also increasing. They, in fact, are helping to maintain the standard of living of those who are affluent and live in the 'in' system. Then there is a limit to the number of people for whom the 'in' system could provide jobs. The truth of this statement is well borne out by the fact that the 'social policy' experts are now pleading for 'rotational' employment which, in layman's language, means the 'lowering' of the retirement age so that more and more people are shunted out of employment — where? Away to the 'out' system of course.

How does the life go on in the 'out' system, on the whole? One great myth that stalks the affluent society and makes the agonies of the 'out' system less biting is the

7 Unemployment benefit is \$ 50.00 per week. The increase that a senior politician secured in the latest indexed increase in August was double what one gets in terms of unemployment benefit.

mistaken belief that whatever may happen to a person shunted out of the system in the affluent society, he does not meet death through starvation as do quite a few people in the third world who suffer from absolute poverty. The poverty in affluent society is supposed to be only 'relative poverty'. But is the supposition true? Let us examine the statement which suffers from two errors. First of all about starvation, one must know that the 'starvation' deaths so-called are not deaths that occur when people are just on forced fasts for so many days and months that they 'drop' dead one morning! All starvation deaths are deaths that are unduly hastened through prolonged malnutrition. This is one error. The other is concerned with the actual position that obtains in the 'out' system. It is as follows

1 About 10% of people in Great Britain have about 22% less calory intake than that of the people of Bangladesh.⁸ Their consumption is also substantially below the minimum required for subsistence. The deprivation is due to the want of purchasing power at their command or, in other words, due to poverty

2. 'Among poor Scottish families infants under one year old are three times more likely to die as those in rich families.'

3 Over a million families in the U.K. live in unlivable houses and quite a few of them have soaked carpets all of the time (a third of the homes in Hutcheson Town and Laurieston in Glasgow, for example). Whereas a great many people in the third world cannot afford the luxury of a carpet, 'absolute poverty' in that part of the world does not force people to live with wet carpets.

4. A majority of the aged in a locality, studied in the U.K., (Hulme, Manchester) live for nine months a year without light and fuel since they can't pay their

electricity bills and their connections are cut off.

5 A hundred thousand people in the U.K. are without any home — neither have they thatched houses nor mud walls to fall back on. Quite a few of them in Australia sleep in parks.

The life in the 'out' system is thus in many ways similar to the life of the poverty zone of the third world. A former Peace Corps worker who had worked in the third world told the *'Time Magazine'* commenting on the poverty of New York, 'I have never seen such poverty anywhere, not even in Western Africa.' This point cannot be argued any further as a social scientist in the U.K. says, that while there is all the data in the U.K. about how many electric cookers are less than three years old, there is no data on starvation or absolute poverty, not because no such phenomenon exists, but because the area of study is not a popular one that would attract funding

'So what?' the question may be asked. 'Some poverty exists in the affluent society. Does it not exist anywhere else?' The comment is legitimate, but the answer is baffling. For the fact is that poverty not only exists in the affluent society and not only do we not know much about its real nature and size, but what we know about it is not encouraging. It follows. Some poverty is not only there, but it is not decreasing. It, in fact, is increasing. It is increasing both in expanse and in depth. What is worse is that the 'methods' and goals which are being used for combating the incidence of deprivation⁹ are, it seems, themselves responsible not only for the poverty that exists but also for its increase day by day

I take only one example from the battery of methods that are used,

9. Regarding the fact that goals are responsible for poverty, we have already mentioned about unemployment and shown how the 'goals' of affluent society require a number of people to be unemployed. Unemployment is thus a function of the structure, so is deprivation and poverty

namely, the financial input provided for welfare services. It is a well known fact today that the more money we spend on welfare the greater becomes the expanse of the 'out' system. The reason for it is simple. The money is often 'poured', as the Indian saying goes, into a bottomless bucket. Welfare is administered by a 'half caste' socialist system — which does all its shopping in the open market. A medicine that costs £18 per unit can be sold to the socialist buyer of health services at £1200 per unit! How much money will then be required to cover up 'deprivation' and buy health? How much more help can the 'half caste' give for a transfer of resources from the public sector to the private coffers and to keep the two systems mutually estranged?

The experiences of the developing societies have shown that 'development' does not by itself remove poverty. It creates some affluence which in turn leads to disorganisation. What has happened to the developed countries is not very different either. Welfare and affluence have not been any more effective than development. The goals of the 'in' system have, it seems, been responsible for the persistence of poverty in the affluent society. If there is one common lesson that we have to draw from these two episodes of contemporary history, it is that affluence cannot by itself mitigate poverty. Will a society without poverty then be one that has not to contend with affluence? While the validity of the above statement is open to change, the wound is gaping and the problem gets more baffling day by day. One thing, however, seems to be certain. Our efforts so far have not succeeded. It would probably require an altogether 'different' 'goal', 'method', 'social policy', 'welfare' or 'development' system and 'philosophy' of life to negotiate the task. It is not beyond human ingenuity to devise the package, provided we are prepared to think.

The purpose of this is not to provide answers but to initiate that process of re-thinking!

8 Bangladesh is not like India where there are people of unequal incomes and an 'average' can well be misleading. An 'average' in Bangladesh would be fairly representative of a 'poverty' standard.

What and for whom?

BASU JOHN

TECHNOLOGY, if considered a resource conversion capability, has absolute levels, as mankind's march from the stone age to the space age of today amply testifies. However, a technology that is appropriate to meeting the needs of a community or country is specific to the hierarchy of needs, available resources, the environmental conditions and the available infra-structure for creating, acquiring, adapting and using technology solutions. Hence, as the approach to technology is specific to the social and economic conditions of a society, perhaps an attempt at an acceptable definition of development in today's context would be a pre-requisite.

Growth, especially economic growth, has always found favour with economists and politicians as it provided a single comprehensive measure with variables that can be quantified and movements that can be analyzed into changes in sectoral output, factor shares or categories of expenditure. In the context of diminishing resources, protected markets and a limited time frame for developing a large percentage of the world's population existing at survival levels, the approach through more rapid growth, leaving the distribution of the output to trickle down through market forces, seems unworkable as seen in the cases of countries in various stages of development through the last decade. The lack of ability of the majority of developing countries to achieve

and sustain the growth rates required, entire regions or substantial portions of populations not benefitting from this growth and the initial worsening of the sub-standard level of living of the poor due to the high capital investment required, have led to small urban pockets of relative affluence within seas of poverty — a socially and politically unacceptable situation.

An alternate strategy which has gained favour recently especially in developing countries like India, approaches development as the realization of the potential of human personality, with people as its focus. This presupposes an hierarchy of human needs sought to be met by any system attempting change. While some of these are linked to economic capability, quality of employment and leisure, social and political stability, security, equality and a host of people-oriented items are included in the measure of development. The approach of employment oriented growth, seems to find more acceptance as the incomes of the majority of the populations of developing countries are determined by both the pace and pattern of national production. Increase in the demand for labour not only ensures active participation of the poor in development, but if additional employment is productive it generates output and incomes needed to improve levels of living.

The new found purchasing power of the masses would increase their

effective demand for basic needs of food, clothing shelter and other essentials and although the utility of money declines sharply as these needs are satisfied, demand for services of health, education and other activities like leisure, are also generated. In a country where the majority of the population exists at subsistence levels, even massive redistribution would not provide a solution for this demand. Hence, a sharp increase in the availability of the basic needs would be the primary requirement. With the limited resources available, this dictates a series of technological innovations in keeping with the employment-oriented growth strategy

As this initial increase in rural incomes is expected to set in motion a sequence of multiplier effects, which can stimulate expanded production and employment in other sectors of the economy, increasing the relative importance of mass consumer goods industries and small scale enterprises, the technological innovations have to extend from agriculture to village industry. The technologies introduced have to make the small scale production of items of basic need and mass consumption competitive and viable while providing an effective counter to the usual phenomenon of the initial benefits of progress accruing to the capital based urban centres or the rural rich, thus ensuring continuity of the development process. The technologies have to utilise freely available materials and energy resources for conversion to fulfil the need of the local community while preserving the employment oriented strategy. This is the challenge of technology for rural development—creating self reliant rural communities

Mankind, over the centuries, has improved its control over the environment, in the process developing an ability to acquire and convert naturally available resources to fulfil a variety of needs. The sea saw of the advancement of civilisation through geographical and climatic regions indicate the influence of new resource availabilities creating technologies for utilisation and new technologies generating new resources. The availability of

energy as plentiful sunshine with the presence of wet, fertile, river valleys dictated the location of the cradles of early civilization in the tropics. Combined with a minimum requirement of clothing, shelter and fuel in the warmer climates these were the earliest examples of a favourable resource availability leading to development. The technology of the mining and utilisation of coal as an energy source led to competitive development in temperate regions with their plentiful precipitation and land resources leading to nation wide increased outputs

The cheap petroleum era further enhanced the advantage of the possessors of the conversion technology, enabling the location and exploitation of further resources, some of which were extracted from the present developing regions. This accumulation of capital and access to resources led to a non-labour intensive, high conversion efficiency technology which was also energy intensive. With the end of the era of plentiful resources and cheap energy in sight, the suitability of present conversion capability alone being an indication of a technology is no longer valid. Ecological costs to be paid for in the future, social costs being paid by the underprivileged, and the conversion costs when growth limits are reached, have now to be considered in the assessment of the net utility of a technology for the sustained fulfilment of human needs

Even in the context of the present, when a range of alternative technologies or even totally different strategies are being compared, a universally acceptable measure of the contribution of the technology to the community, region or nation has to be evolved before decisions to develop, modify or adapt it can be made. Having concluded that increasing the per capita income is a necessary but not sufficient condition for development, the now popular Physical Quality of Life Index, using life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy as indicators, could be used. This provides a useful measure of the influence of various strategies and technology systems and correlates well with a country's

success in meeting the minimum human requirements of its population. The apparent inclusion of cultural and other non-economically determinable factors as well as patterns of distribution of capital and incomes is indicated in the fact that Kerala in South India with one hundredth of the per capita income of Kuwait, scores as high in the PQLI scale.

A suggested alternative for a measure of the development through technology innovation is a decrease in Time Cost of Living Index which is measured as the proportion of available daily employment (limited to a maximum of an eight hour working day) needed to provide a universally acceptable basic needs standard. Averaged over communities or regions, this would account for employment opportunities, distributed purchasing power, availability of goods and services, as well as provide an indication of surplus incomes for secondary needs, luxuries and leisure activity—a more justifiable measurement of the realisation of the potential of human personality

Technology resources available as systems designs, patents, products, components, technical experts and groups, companies and organisations etc., are well documented and can be accessed through data banks or information centres the world over. However, over seventy per cent of R & D spendings are in the United States alone and ninety seven per cent in the industrialised countries with their industrial and technological knowledge, developing workable solutions designed for the requirements of advanced economies with high labour costs and relatively abundant capital. Even where workable solutions are available, they are likely to be limited to the small modernised urban sector and of little help to the masses in developing countries. Even in the insignificant percentage of research done in developing countries, a large portion is oriented towards defence, space, atomic energy and other glamour areas where enormous amounts are being spent catching up with technology already developed elsewhere and of doubt-

ful direct significance to the majority of the population

Whatever the source of the technology, the interrelated set of capabilities forming the technology system — capacity to create, acquire, adapt and use technological solutions, is an infra-structure pre-requisite. While the capacity for technology change represented by a host of agencies and institutions housing specialists in a wide variety of disciplines along with the facilities for advanced levels of work ranging from hybrid seed to solar energy is a necessary condition, it is, as demonstrated time and again, not a sufficient condition for development. The technology system must be integrated with an extension of a society's economic, social and political institutions, values and goals. Radical change in agricultural, industrial and social development creates demand for new scientific and technological inputs. The existing infra-structure, fostered at enormous cost, oriented towards an international achievement scale, must be motivated to change, creating new technology systems with strong supply-demand relationships with the needs of the rural masses. A delivery system would have to be established using existing channels to perform the series of steps required to integrate an innovation into the social fabric of a community, i.e., study of the requirements, selection of an appropriate technological innovation, ensuring adaptation to suit local socio-economic patterns and examining post innovation problems of extendability, continuity and maintenance.

Clearly, the solution lies outside the technology system. Technology is a tool and can orient itself to the requirements of the community — social, economic and political. The technological capability and the infra structure for rural development exist. The challenge is in its management.

Energy as an entry point in development must be oriented towards the replacement of the vanishing sources of today. And the fuel crisis is not oil for our rural masses — over

half of all fuel used in India is fire-wood. In an environment conditioned to batch processing and rescheduling requirements based on availability of resources, the complexity of conversion or storage of energy sources like solar energy or biogas need not hold up the introduction of new technologies to replace access to receding forests and firewood. That G.N.P. is inevitably linked to energy utilised, has been clearly established. Growth of rural industrialisation is dependent on tapping all available resources of energy and adapting production processes to the most freely available ones, considering the resources of raw materials and capital available. Is our research and technology sufficiently committed to this specific goal?

Most developing countries are well endowed with at least one of the renewable resources that trace back to the sun-solar radiation, wind energy, biomass, water energy, etc. The specific requirements of rural level use are availability and costs. In applications like heating and drying of crops, pumping water for irrigation, and even for domestic cooking, the energy could be provided when available. It is not required on demand as the use of the traditional alternative firewood as a stand-by, requires no investment. Thus, conversion and storage problems are not initially significant when a source like solar energy is planned as an alternative to hydroelectric and nuclear electricity generation. With technology advances expected in the near future, the energy production-utilisation scheme can be extended to small and medium scale solar thermal plants for conversion to electrical energy, photovoltaic electricity, solar cooling and refrigeration, microbial solar energy conversion systems, to name a few representative technologies emerging today, making a solar energy based system more viable.

The introduction of an energy scheme into a community must be done in stages to create user acceptance. Solar energy seems an ideal candidate, starting with providing energy for households to improve

basic living conditions, to provide the energy requirement for agriculture, for irrigation, food processing and controlled environment, to providing energy for small scale industrial production and community level uses. Initially, a per household requirement of cooking of a kilowatt for about three hours a day and a village of a hundred families, the requirement of below two hundred kilowatts per day would not be viable for central generation and supply. Individual solar concentrators would provide for this requirement for an average of over two hundred sunny days a year in most of India if they could be made available at a cost affordable by the average villager. This demands designs of concentrators using cheap materials and low production costs. Perhaps innovation in basic designs for suitability at rural level is also involved. However, when it is considered that over fifty million households are potential consumers, the design effort would seem very worthwhile.

Extension of the developing solar energy system to agricultural irrigation would require scaling up of the solar plant to between ten and fifteen kilowatts' heating capacity as loss in conversion to mechanical power has to be accounted for and two to three kilowatt pumps are to be driven. Even this scale may not justify central units for villages: pumping locations are distributed over large distances. It would, however, provide the experience and acceptance of unconventional technology introduction to traditional rural systems and provide the infra-structure and social climate for the final transition to giant central solar plants with storage and electricity generation and demand supply capability to the entire community. Viable fifteen kilowatt unit designs are known to exist. A hundred kilowatt unit is being built which may be the forerunner of tomorrow's rural power. Ten such units per village would increase the country's installed energy capability many-fold, providing the first pre-requisite to development — plentiful energy.

A biogas system based on agricultural wastes or fermentation of the

fast growing water hyacinth, could also be considered for gradual introduction as rural energy source. The schemes, problem solutions and delivery systems would all follow if the focus of the major portion of technology development work could be shifted to the rural scene.

Food is the largest production industry employing the greatest numbers of people and consuming the largest component of energy. While labour intensive agriculture is claimed to be wasteful in land utilisation, mechanisation demands a tremendous increase in energy input per unit output. Western agriculture costs the equivalent of one ton of oil per year per person fed, a cost that cannot be accepted by the world energy system if India's millions have to be fed likewise. Intermediate approaches, retaining energy saving employment orientation, have to be sought both at the technology and socio economic levels. Alternative sources for animal protein, like lentils, are widely used. That milk can be replaced by soya beans and protein rich algae at a fraction of the costs, leading to wider benefits from nutrition supplementation of diet, is less easily accepted, lacking the religious motivation. Innovation and technology need motivation and planned delivery systems for effecting change.

Any scheme for technology innovation in food production and delivery systems must consider the primary considerations that influenced the development of the present food industry in the West. From an energy output (measured as energy content in the food produced) to the energy input ratio of over ten in pre-industrial agriculture, with most of the input being muscular work of men and animals, the present efficiencies of only one to three for crops, and as low as 0.1 to 0.3 for poultry and dairy products, were reached at a high energy cost. The resulting increase of the per man hour output by at least some order of magnitude, freed scarce labour for industrial production. In an era of increasing energy costs and the need to provide employment to millions, the consequences of attempting to follow the totally mechanised system is self evident.

Any attempt to replace labour with capital must take into account the cost of providing alternate employment. Perhaps extension of cultivable land and crop development are initial areas for work. Technological innovations for increasing crop yield through development of new varieties, plant protection and development of water resources and its management could directly affect living conditions in rural areas.

A typical example of adaptation of a labour saving technology from the West to conserve a scarce resource in a rural environment, while actually providing the potential for increased outputs and perhaps even employment, is the case of drip irrigation. Used in orchards and vineyards, the piped water delivery system with a regulated periodic supply to each tree, using a complex assembly of valves and nozzles enabled automated control of irrigation and the saving in labour, making the high capital costs viable.

An advantage of the system is the considerable saving in water that would otherwise have evaporated when normal surface watering is done. In India, the availability of labour enables the adaptation of the ancient pot irrigation, where an earthen pot, buried to the neck under each plant, is manually refilled with water every few days, to a form of drip irrigation, without the high capital costs of the first scheme. Pots located at convenient distances feed a number of individual plants through inexpensive narrow tubes, delivering water directly to the root area in required quantities. In the simplest systems the gravity flow is regulated by the tube diameters and the height of water in the pot. As the quantity of water evaporating is drastically reduced, the possibility that brackish water would not add significantly to soil salts opens up areas that could not be utilised for agriculture. Water being the scarce resource in many areas, more land can be planted if the innovation is adopted.

A similar resource available for development are raid fed ponds that dot our countryside by the thousands. It has been demonstrated

that with suitable adaptation, the method of fish culture can convert these ponds into miniature fish stations, self sufficient and productive, managed by the rural population, providing the much needed protein input into the diet. The natural depressions, remaining filled with water from six to eleven months provide ideal conditions as the food chain created when it starts to fill at the first rains provides an abundance of nutrients that, with the right selection of fish variety, could produce fish weighing up to half a kilogram in the life span of the pond. Harvesting when the pond has shrunk to a low level eliminates need for expensive equipment. Starting the cycle anew each year overcomes the problems of disease. Above all the innovation provides a food output while providing employment at little or no capital cost using an existing resource. What is needed is the technology input to acquire, adapt and deliver such innovations.

Industrial or organised production of goods in small scale manufacture is an employment oriented activity. However, it may be argued that manufacturing cost effectiveness is almost always on the side of large scale mass production. When total costs including social costs of unemployment caused by mechanisation are considered, a stronger case may be made for distributed rural industry for mass consumption goods. As estimated by Washington's World Watch Institute, the \$20000 cost per job in the United States could provide a thousand to ten thousand jobs in sugar processing in India depending on the scale of the industry. So also with nuclear vs solar power programmes. While the exact figures may be questioned, the orders of magnitude are self-evident. It is agreed that the terminology 'appropriate technology' refers to what is most suitable in a particular set of circumstances, given wage levels and supply of capital, policies and resources limitations, the choice for small scale distributed manufacture seems stronger. But, one has to consider possible changes in cost levels in the future or a technology backthrough like cheap atomic fusion energy.

making energy intensive manufacture viable once more

Another factor to be considered is the status attached to modern methods and machines, especially to the minority who also happen to be decision makers. Perhaps the best analysis for appropriate technology in industrial manufacture would be with respect to the investment for replacing a worker, the social cost of unemployment or creation of an alternate job, cost of developing and managing more labour intensive techniques, cost in product quality and customer acceptance, and the loss of scarce raw materials in non-mechanised production. Specific levels of automation may be arrived at depending on the individual industry as in the case of textiles where the waste of yarn that forms a major cost of the cloth may make handlooms non-viable inspite of the employment potential, while capital costs and social overheads may indicate small power looms in village communities as more appropriate than large scale mill manufacture. However, this assumes that the processing of the cotton upto the weaving stage is done efficiently, which would not be possible if the off take was not sufficiently large. The technology to process the raw materials to produce the required quality at competitive costs in small batches required by village industry is an area for technology innovation not only in textiles but in a host of other manufacturing processes.

Many supporting activities taken for granted in mass production would have to be developed and maintained at a scale affordable by the rural entrepreneurs. Repair and maintenance facilities require tools and skills that cannot be supported by single communities. The design of the manufacturing technology must take into account the constraints of a rural environment. Only with considerable effort at building self-reliance at the community or regional level can rural manufacture be expected to survive. Food and agricultural produce processing, an industry with a high potential for going rural requires guaranteed power as it handles perishables.

Although the advantage of weight reduction from raw materials to final product that gives rural agro industry its advantages, exist, transportation of the output may require better packaging, or handling and storage capability. Conversion of sugarcane into sugar or manufacture of bottled fruit products would be examples. Technology innovation at each stage making the production, storage and delivery systems less sensitive and more efficient to enable rural small scale manufacture to compete more effectively with large scale mechanised industry, would be a basic requirement if rural industrialisation is to proceed at a pace that would provide an impact on the living standards of the majority of our population and is to be sustainable in the long run.

Medical intervention can take many forms. Health delivery systems can conduct health education at a fraction of the cost of even the most rudimentary medicare, covering much larger populations at the same costs. Dispensaries, hospitals and surgical attention all progressively cost more. The trade-off has to consider the cases requiring more expensive treatment that could have been prevented by a comparative outlay at an earlier stage. An analysis would probably show that scarce medical funds being spent on modern medical facilities and specialists benefit a disproportionately small fraction of the population, preserving or aggravating traditional inequalities. If an alternative approach is to be adopted our institutions and infrastructure facilities have to be provided with the technology for cost effective health care delivery to over five hundred million people.

These and other approaches to technological innovation for the development of rural populations have long been discussed. The existence of technical capability, especially with India's science and technology infrastructure, has never been in doubt. What is needed, for the realisation of the potential for its application to development, is a commitment from our technology managers and technologists to the cause of the rural masses.

The democratisation of power

ROMESH THAPAR

WE are witnesses to a strangely paradoxical situation. Aware of the limits to our known resources, but determined to consume as never before. Conscious of the need to assist the poorer communities to rise to levels of human living, but unable or reluctant to see the organic link between waste and want on our planet. Sensitive to the destruction of the environment, but prepared to take a selfish, short-term view. Horrified by the brutal wars of the post-colonial period, particularly those which ravaged Asia, but tolerant of new interventions in Africa. Passionately wedded to the idea of peace, but quietly committed to military budgets which have crossed \$ 400 billion dollars a year. This is only a partial view of the picture of our shame, but it should be enough to halt our theorising and make us re-think.

In this re-thinking, a pattern seems to emerge. As society advances, science and technology, by their very nature, dictate a process of intense centralisation. On the other hand, at the human level, advance means better health, education and greater numbers of human beings in a position to participate in the planning of their own lives. This then is the great

contradiction of our age which creates a rapidly growing stockpile of violence. For instance, what say has the average citizen in the \$ 400 billion dollars a year expenditure on armaments? At which level and at which point can he really intervene in the decision-making process. All doors are actually sealed — and then the banging starts. And this is true at almost every point of living. Significantly, no political framework has attempted to come to grips with this central question — and nor have a harassed people.

The cynical, and now increasingly corrupt, politician — authoritarian, democratic, ideologue, tribal, gangster — is answered in a twisted, tortured way by the nihilistic terrorism of the Naxalites in India, the Red Brigades in Europe, the Palestinian guerrillas, the Japanese executioners, and many others who have come to believe that violence in all its unthinking savagery is the only language understood by the planetary establishments as at present constituted. Those who are the proponents of the violence are, by and large, cultivated minds. Their appeal is to the alienated, to the many millions of unemployed, the lost and the supposedly

damned who see no way out of the crises which engulf them. The flower children of yesterday have disappeared. Their successors carry guns, lethal guns, and they train carefully for their role as killers.

Despite the veneer or gloss, our apparently complacent world is in torment. Inflation is rampant. Unemployment is rising. The solid economic structures are showing cracks which widen without warning. Demand, that motivated pump of 'productivity', is flagging and nothing seems to excite it. Yes, a series of interventionary wars in Africa, on the pattern of those which plagued Asia until the passion of Vietnam buried them, may be used to re-fuel the failing economies of the developed world and its allies among the developing. The facts which now crowd in upon us cannot be programmed into computers. There are no statistics which can explain the failure of the institutions and organisations upon which decision-making power has so far been structured, and upon which we inevitably base ourselves when attempting solutions to our growing problems. We are impotent because we do not address ourselves to the structuring of power, its democratisation.

As more and more people want to be heard in the ordering of their everyday life, the decision-making power gets increasingly concentrated in fewer specialist hands which seek answers in the mutations of old theories and stratagems. The new pressures demand new responses at the level of concept, organisation and action. Indeed, those who are demanding a voice in the management of their affairs, have to be assisted in evolving a role. The alternative is a violent birth of some such initiative. We have to find a way of associating ordinary people with the processes of decision-making — and boldly reform the organisations and institutions which until now served only elitist decision making. Only through such participative action can we meet the challenge of the age that has passed beyond elitist guidance and

manipulation to genuine egalitarianism demanding decentralised, participative decision-making at every level of life and living.

Let me explain this qualitative change in the texture of human aspirations. The end of the age of imperialism marked by the aftermath of World War II, despite the colonial debris all around the world and sophisticated mechanisms like the multi-national corporations, actually placed a question-mark over every aspect of humanity's *organised* activities. Until now, these activities were disciplined by the concept that all advance, political, economic and social, was under the aegis of a specially-trained and acknowledged elite. Ever since World War II, this elite, developed, developing and under-developed, based on class, commerce, community, colour, creed and caste, has been fighting a losing battle to preserve an infrastructure of power which is no longer acceptable to the many millions of egalitarians demanding that this infrastructure respond to their needs and visions.

All manner of attempts are made through financial and market manipulations to blunt the angers inherent in this situation. What is remarkable is that it has been possible to do so for so long. And we may still witness political — and military — wizardry to preserve the *status quo* of elitist power, but now the chips are down. There are too many people who refuse to be fobbed off. And the contradictions within the international elitist power structure are too complex for careful papering over. The polarisation at the United Nations and within its agencies, the paralysis in the North-South dialogue, the ruptures within the communist system, the beginnings of explosive migrations to blot out the distinctions between the white, the black, the brown, the yellow, between continents, and the tussle over raw materials so dramatically illustrated by oil, sketch a backdrop against which rather naive manipulators attempt a precarious holding operation.

But, it is already too late. No computer tricks can create growth

models on the *status quo* even in statistical form. Soon, these visions will be part of historical memory, pleasant for those who sat on the top of elitist situations. The task today is a challenge for the minds of men and women. We have to create from the near wreckage a more meaningful system of organising life and living, nationally, regionally, hemispherically and universally. Each area is not exclusive to the other. It calls for a drastic reorientation of thinking, and the careful harmonising of a set of priorities that open the way to this reorientation without totally disrupting the infrastructures of life and living before we have gained some general acceptance for the alternatives. To conduct this fundamental exercise on the drifting sands of the *status quo* is to invite a slow and creeping paralysis.

It is necessary to detail some framework of an approach if only to indicate roughly the dimensions within which we will be moving, dimensions which have to be drawn whenever qualitative changes are envisaged.

1. The processes which have concentrated power in fewer and fewer hands have to be countered by a deliberate policy of decentralising decision-making and implementation. This is the absolute essential for any corrective action, and it has to be advanced politically even at the risk of a possible deterioration in the quality of decision-making in the initial stages. At least, implementation will see improvement — and that is a major part of the effort for better performance.
2. Decentralisation has to be accomplished by a major effort to buttress the autonomy of autonomous organisations, the autonomy that has been eroded, surrendered, and twisted beyond recognition by defective functioning and leadership. The built-in autonomies in decentralisation are of vital importance particularly in societies with an advanced degree of public spiritedness and accountability.

3. With the perspective of decentralised functioning and autonomous responsibility more widely understood and upheld, it will become necessary to go through a prolonged period of listening to the people. This simple base of good and humane governance has been so totally forgotten by the wielders of concentrated power that those who listen develop what could be described as instant charisma. It is here that the first lessons in a kind of participative activity are imbibed. So many turbulent ideas and concepts, which come to us dressed in angry, nihilistic and self-destructive movements, can be distilled in the effort to listen to the people who are in their own way trying to solve the problems which envelop humanity. In other words, planning should begin from the base upwards. This phase defuses the explosive polarisations and initiates the business of adjusting to new ways of thinking and doing.
4. At this stage, a large-scale experiment is needed in various forms of running organisations and institutions, intensifying participation of members, and working out procedures to resolve conflicts. The more varied the experiment the better. Only this practical experience can indicate the more constructive and creative paths to resolving the problems which have paralysed and fractured beyond repair our existing infrastructure of functioning. This is certainly the most difficult phase in the process of re-designing the business of life and living. A rigid, meaningless *status quo*, of no use to anyone, is consciously shaken up, opened up, made to respond to new pressures. Naturally, the old entrenched interests fight back in the name of discipline, of norms and what have you. The experimentation can be excessive, but it should be tolerated. No harm really results from healthy motivations.
5. The attempt to create new structures from this experience will naturally assume parallel importance. This is inevitable as society always seeks well-defined parameters of procedure, functioning and accountability. If, however, the paramount need for flexibility can be built into the effort, a major insurance against new rigidities will have been registered. We have to see the future in flexible, creative terms and our effort to visualise it and to translate it on the ground must embody a mix of utopianism, of continuous experimentation, feed-back and testing, and of a questioning based on a value system which nurtures an enlightened, humane and just social order for the world's population irrespective of the differences that might continue to prevail among the continents.
6. These processes will have to be accompanied by a great shaking down of our rather fixed and unbending notions about the organisation of our lives. We have to frontally assault wasteful living in its many forms — from obsessive 'consumerism' to the disease of being 'with it' to the carefully organised mirage of modern tourism, to the culture of change for the sake of change. The role assumed by the mass media, and the 'neutrality' of educational systems, have made the speedy mounting of this assault on false standards well nigh impossible. Then again, the vested interest in the perpetuation of this culture of alienation is so enormous that the voice which proclaims its dissent never gets a full hearing. Elitism is international. It has had many years to foster its false programming for the world. Wherever one turns, the same picture of elitism emerges — admittedly under different labels and slogans, so many of them remarkably populist, but catering to centralised decision-making and turning human beings into contented or discontented cogs in an apparatus of supposed economic growth. The alternatives have never been spelled out. Without them the battle cannot be joined.
7. Alternatives which are not supported by considerable and varied demonstration on the ground — as has been suggested earlier — are easily dismissed as unpractical, romantic, utopian. Using the spontaneous experimentation, injecting into it other professional skills and technologies, selecting catalytic priorities, prototypes of a new design for living have to be carefully elaborated, explained and applied. The success of a variety of inter-connected prototypes concerned with a new design for living prepare the basis for projecting alternatives meaningful to the people at large. Significantly, this work has begun in a haphazard way in all parts of the world, whether it is a new-style habitation, a system of mass transport, the pedestrianisation of a locality, the organisation of a secure neighbourhood through self-help and popular participation, the revival of old skills and the successful marketing of the produce of this revival, the illustrations of the growing autonomy of the working force in farm and factory and its capacity to understand its role within a broader framework, and the remarkable efforts being made to consciously decentralise power and its culture and environment. These are only the more visible signs of the ferment. Much more is happening at micro level. This is the kind of ferment that embroiders every situation of unrest and anger and alienation in the world.

In other words, at this sorry juncture in the affairs of our planet, it is imperative that we move from theorising about the condition of humanity and focus, obsessively if you like, on the existing structures of power and how they militate against the effort to re-design new ways of growing up and living. Unless power is truly democratised, decentralised, we will continue breaking our heads against the intransigence of established interests who refuse to countenance what to them appears an extreme view of

the crises creeping on us from all sides.

The scenarios for the democratisation of power are many and varied but we have to find specific answers to the massive manipulations of power by the politicians and by political formations, the calculated misuse of the special levers of power such as the police and the military, the growing role of corruption and harassment and how it is directly linked with the concentration of power that becomes increasingly non-accountable, the underpinning provided by hierarchies of teachers and communicators to the subtle break down of independent thought and action, and the inherent blackmail lust of the leaders of the organisations of the working force which originally rose to discipline centres of power

Concentrated, centralised power creates its own counter which is also concentrated and centralised. The collision between the two is within a framework that resolves no problem fundamentally. Indeed, endless collisions exhaust social conscience, opening the way to a contest for dominance between two movements of authoritarianism — both aimed, incidentally, at filling 'the belly of the people', to keep them quiet and subservient to the new elite combinations in the making. This is the gut problem facing us. It is visible everywhere and cries out for an answer. In the inevitable silence, the desperate seek to change the world through acts of terror

If we are in the vanguard of the forces moving to salvage this planet from the fearful fate that awaits it if it does not change the quality of its thrust — yes, when it is expending the colossal sum of \$ 400 billion dollars a year on maintaining military machines — then initiatives must be taken to provide a new content to the international debate on political, economic and information orders, on the issues dividing the northern and southern hemispheres, and the tasks of building the life of the poor and under-developed. It can only become real if the democratisation of power is seen as the gut problem. If we shirk it, we only prolong our traumas

Hinduism and authoritarianism

G A NARIBOLI

IN the post-Emergency period, a number of interpretations about the lack of resistance etc, being inherent to India, to Hinduism, etc, have appeared. In this article, the author hopes to present a different view, bad as we are, we are not all that bad.

Though much of the interpretation depends on the definitions and the norms adopted, it is assumed that one can agree on the existence of communist dictatorships (self-confessed as such and so justified on philosophical grounds) in the developed and the under-

developed world as also of 'crude' militaristic-cum-personal dictatorships, which also justify the necessity on grounds of rapid achievements of goals of growth, development, modernisation and justice the distinction, if it ever, existed, is getting increasingly blurred India has been the singular exception in surviving to afford the experiment of the 'luxury' of democracy in all of the underdeveloped world, almost continually, for thirty odd years, no country, other than India, can claim any influence of Hinduism. Further, the so-acclaimed democracies have not all been free of authoritarian periods, comparable to our nineteen month slide down. Inadequate as we may have been, we are still standing up and stumbling along and learning.

Shameful as it is that we still have our socio-religious outcastes (Harijans, etc.) and apartheid (communism, casteism etc.) tendencies, we need to look around. Four, at least, of the highly developed modern industrial democracies (U.S.A., Canada, Japan and Australia) have reduced the 'natives' of their lands to archeological relics and historical curiosities, culturally, economically and physically, in a fraction of a period compared to Indian history. The share of advanced societies, communist and non-communist, in the enslavement of Africa is not small. Recurring mass-genocides, not always of 'exploiters' but also of 'comrades in arms', have turned out to be features of communist societies 'Palace Revolutions', assumed to be features of the exploiting princely class, have been the normal processes by which a transition or 'crown change' in communist societies takes place. This is always accompanied by further genocides of 'reactionaries'.

Returning to India, however symbolic some may consider it to be, we have a Deputy Prime Minister (and a potential Prime Minister) from the Harijans, quite a few Muslims, Christians, Harijans and other minority communities have held eminent positions in government, industry and other fields; Though affiliations of caste and parochialism do influence voting

patterns, the regard our people have for their leaders is always based on their ideologies and contributions, transcending all narrow affiliations. True, our Mathadhipatis do belong to our castes but every one of our saints has transcended not only caste, but also religion and geography! Although our goal of 'secularism' still eludes us, our urban Christians and Muslims and Harijans have evolved into powerful political pressure groups, to assert themselves against the non secular pressures from the numerically dominant Hindus. Hurdles that a multi-lingual, multi-religious society like ours faces cannot be compared with uni-religious, unilingual societies, problems of rural societies are different from those of industrial societies.

The major (successful in surviving) classical religions of the world have sought and continue to seek to 'proselytize' through the threat of the 'sword' and the use of 'enticements' of wealth and power. Everything that is different is evil, is a threat and hence must be eliminated through whatever means available. Hinduism (as also the numerically smaller religions of Judaism and Zoroastrianism) happens to be an exception. It seems to accommodate, reconcile, absorb and influence rather than convert and eliminate.

The story of modern religions needs no elaboration. Through genocidal proxy wars, fought with increasingly sophisticated weapons supplied by the advanced countries, fought for 'modern' 'scientific' causes, the under-developed continue to provide free amusement and entertainment to the developed world, as did slaves in ancient Rome.

The confusion of integration with uniformisation had disastrous results and continues to trouble a large number of our politicians and intellectuals. Whatever theoretical, and howsoever high-browed, arguments are put forth in the cause of uniformisation, the realities of the Indian situation, political, linguistic and cultural, preclude such a solution without large-scale

genocidal conflicts, as is evidenced by our 'Gurus', the advanced industrial societies of the West. Such a solution, even as a temporary one, is impossible except through a highly authoritarian regime at the centre. The author rejects it, not simply on moral humanistic grounds, but because in his view it is just a theoretical perversion. Ironically, a good number of intellectuals, both of the left and of the right, mostly theoreticians, hold identical views on this need for uniformisation.

Religions have a common character, religiosity. For Hinduism, it implies an attitude to and a discipline in life towards a goal of 'spiritual self-realisation'. However 'unscientific, obscurantist nonsense' this appears to be to some modernists, the broad religiosity of attitude survives, even in the best of atheists! It is hardly antisocial, antidevelopment or anti-socio-economic justice; on the contrary, it has contributed positively and significantly towards the achievement of these goals.

Religions, classical and modern, also accumulate a lot of trash (may be) in their mythology, ritualism, superiority complex, protectionism and separatism: the old ones crumble in a free society more quickly under the impact of developments in science and technology, and struggles for socio-economic justice and equality, unfortunately, fresh trash continues to accumulate.

The superiority complex leads to the creation of salesmanship agencies which need well-financed institutions to carry out the managerial-organisational-control functions. The inherent self-interest of institutions forces them to take sides with status-quoism and hence against the change of modernisation and/or of development and/or of social justice. The institutions themselves can turn out to be agents of structural injustice.

Hinduism built 'temples' but not 'churches'. Granting the existence of some 'fat-wealthy temples' of some 'special gods', these institutions, harmful as they are, are insignificant compared to the inter-

nationally financed and controlled, gigantic and enormous organisations of Christianity and Islam. Modern religions have refined them, if at all

Bhakti, as a cult, has been exploited by all societies, by all religions, by all ideologies, all political institutions and by all nation-States, in a thousand fold more effective way, compared to Hinduism

Bhakti, as a discipline, belongs (or should belong) philosophically to Vaishnavism, which has an insignificant number of adherents amongst Hindus. But, as with everything in Hinduism, in reality, it has exercised a sort of hegemony on all of Hinduism, even Islam has not been free of it. Bhakti, as a philosophical aspect and as a discipline in Hinduism, demands, as a *pre-requisite*, the total self-surrender even of aspirations not only of wealth but also of power and fame. How can one interpret it as exploitative? Bhakta saints have largely tended to come from and/or identified themselves with the lowliest sections of the society, quite a few have, though inadvertently, spearheaded anti-establishment mini revolutions

There is also a tendency, based on superficial appearances, to infer the predominance of 'God' in the Bhakti discipline. Indeed God happens to be an inessential (minor, if at all) aspect of Hinduism. That is why there was a God for every Hindu, at one time, and, everyone's God is worshipped by everyone else also, in different ways, though. The best role of God in Hinduism, is as a vehicle, as a catalyst. The attribute of Hinduism of being a 'personal philosophy' rather than being a social philosophy, of not being an 'organised religion' and the tendency to resolve conflicts by accommodation rather than by confrontation, by absorbing and influencing rather than by conversion and annihilation, are all inherent attributes of Hinduism in its being a religion. Religious wars have thus been a major feature of non-Hindu religions. Marxian interpreters do not seem to disagree on these being attri-

butes of Hinduism, but they interpret 'accommodation' as 'surrender'. Euro-communists seem to be the first Marxian theorists asserting the possibility of accommodation not being the same as surrender. But who is the authority in poly-theistic Marxism? The successful ones?

This is the only genuine subject of debate today, if Hinduism has been instrumental in raising this issue, it should go to its credit. The debate is largely settled fanatically and by compulsions resulting from unwillingness at experimentation. Leftists, interpreting accommodation as surrender, assert at what cost? Rightists, interpreting it as status-quoism, seek smug comfort under its umbrella. The failure to interpret correctly has led to Vietnam and Cambodia, neither of the above groups seem to be willing to learn anything yet from this current history, may be, another holocaust in Africa will prove it. The solution has really slipped out of our hands, big-power involvement converts every confrontation into a mass-genocidal conflict, which has little basis in local tensions

Admitting our shame in our 'knife thy neighbour' criminal adventurism in the ghastly holocaust of the late 1940s, the author still believes in our good fortune of not getting our hands on bombs and machine guns.

To conclude this section on Hinduism, assertions made in the interpretation of Hinduism as breeding authoritarianism, seem to find little basis in facts. Granting the existence of our storm-troopers, others have more fanatic ones and better armed ones, there is little evidence to assert that non-Hindu religions have produced more intellectual rebels, given even the adverse opportunity born of Indian poverty. In how many world societies do we find the 'far-out' Bertrand Russell societies?

Democracy is accommodation, not surrender. It is the only self-corrective mechanism to restrain the violence and oppression that is

continually produced by institutions. Who said it better than the 'Father of our Nation'? Unfortunately, democracy, though providing a mechanism, is not automatic, it has to be initiated by man

One needs to examine the more general problem of the recent opposition of every leftist (defined here as one with a passion for socio-economic justice and equality) to religion in totality. Of course, some opposition, less concrete and intense though, does come from those who only (or additionally) stand for science and modernisation (an aspect not dwelt upon here).

This opposition may be assumed to have started with Marx. The classical argument of the 'hanging' of Galileo by the Church makes little sense now, many have been and continue to be 'lynched' daily in authoritarian States today, communist societies leading in that achievement. At the time of Marx the Church did evolve in the West into a domineering institution, this seems to hold for all Jerusalem born religions. It is really an irony that Christianity, more than any other religion, was born more as a revolt of the oppressed and ended up creating the 'strongest' churches of all religions, it is excelled only by the Marxist church. The reaction of Marx may be considered natural, but by no means obvious. If only Marxism had opposed the Church but not Christianity, may be, the communist societies would have evolved into more human societies and Marx's second dream of the 'State withering away' could have had a chance

The explanation of Gramsci, considered the father of Euro-Communism, (by some at least) appears more satisfactory. He is regarded as having absolved Marxism of its mechanism and economism. The exploiter exploits, not simply by 'owning the means of production', but by exercising (exorcising) a 'hegemony' in the cultural, educational, social, political and economic fields of activity. Through this 'spiritual domination' of the very 'soul' of man, the exploited becomes a willing voluntary partner in the exploitation by the exploiter. There can be no

more beautiful and more cruel example of this than the Marxian interpretation of the exploitation of Harijans by caste Hindus. Rahul Sanskritayana gave an analogous explanation of the hegemony of Hinduism through its 'Neti' and 'So ham', in the philosophical realm.

Brilliant, scholarly and beautiful (claimed sometimes as 'scientific too') as these explanation are, they fail to recognise the basic problem of institutions and their tendency to self-perpetuate, outliving their usefulness and they hardly touch upon the religiosity, a common feature of religions, which continues not only to survive but shine more brilliantly when rid of their myths, rituals, churches and gods.

Last, it is singularly unjust and thoroughly unscientific to judge a society by the Sai-Baba saints and the Satya-Narayana gods. It produces, all systems, societies, religions have their Sai-Babas and Satya Narayanas, it is hitting a man at his weakest point, this 'fatalism' continues to sway every one at some moment, it speaks for the weakness of the man but not the strength of a religion. To conclude, Hindus are not unique about this aspect, Every society entertains them, some more powerful than ours.

The Church (as it represents a closed ideology or a religion), the State and the Military have been the three sources of power, economics and technology are the new sources. When these conflicted, revolt was easier, to the extent that these unite, or find mutual accommodation, socio-economic and freedom struggles become more difficult. Communist societies have achieved a unique unity.

Inverted pyramidal institutions are the basic sources of authoritarianism. Any model of development taken imitatively from a developed society is bound to be such an inverted-pyramidal structure for every under-developed society, and hence the source of authoritarianism.

The intelligentsia in the under-developed societies are dazzled by the affluence of the affluent. They

are confident of 'catching up' given leadership and the time.

There are many more factors, the history of exploitation, which continues, the wide resource base of some and the ability to exploit the base of the under-developed ones, are some factors not strictly considered. But we continue to delude ourselves given industriousness and technology, we too will get 'there'.

Our development has been modern, gigantic, but not relevant and just. We have done a reasonable job in 'catching up' with regard to GNP and defence. But we may not be any nearer the 'mirage'. The model caters to the aspirations and pride as also the needs and comforts of the elite. The basic necessities of the larger section remain unfulfilled, the army of the unemployed swells, it bleeds the larger populace and can ultimately cost the country's freedom. Some attention needs to be given to the problems of the larger population.

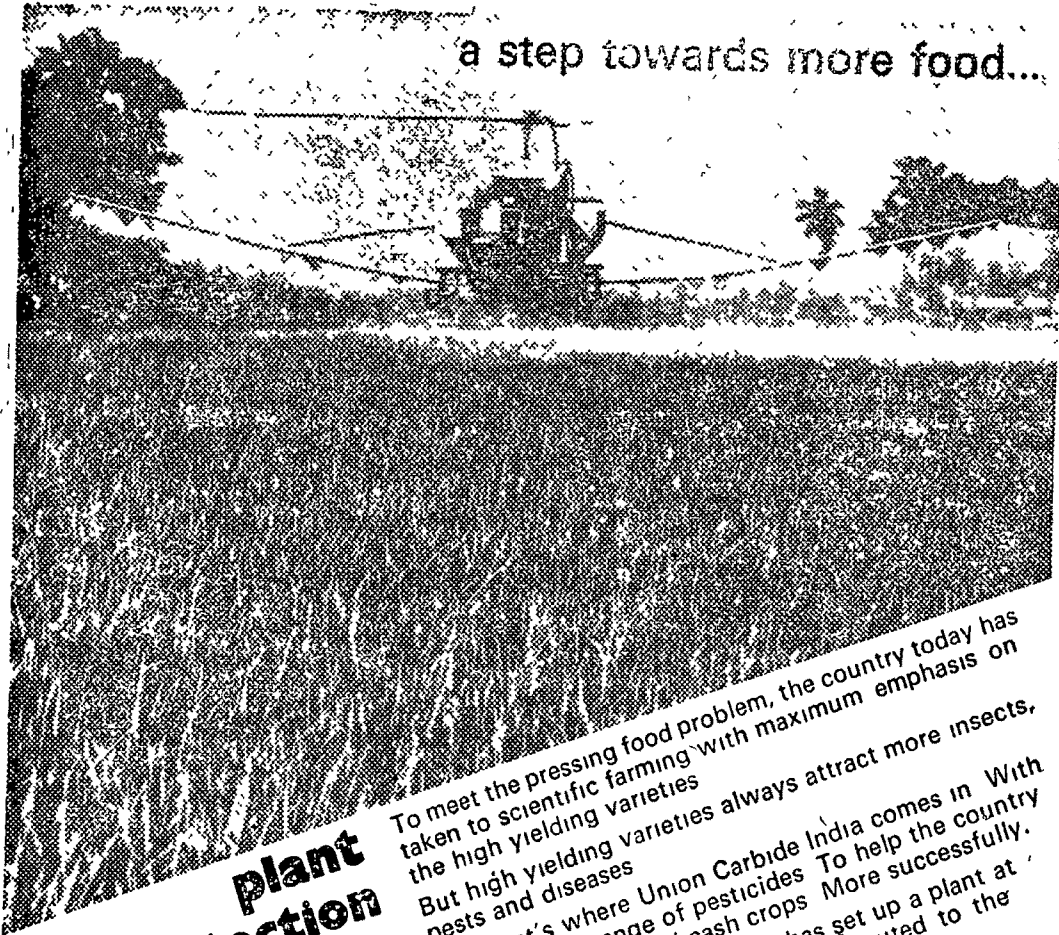
For the under-developed world, socio-economic justice is a prerequisite of survival. A developmental model must start from the base up, absorb increasing segments of the population, year to year, not decade to decade, in the production process, in the nation building process.

For the destitute on the land, freedom will ultimately, if not already, turn out to be a meaningless term, here lies the breeding ground of authoritarianism. The strongest deterrent against authoritarian trends is a large population which has a stake in freedom.

Religion has not proved an impediment in our adaptation to science and technology; why should it be one in building a just and free society?

The people, at large, have not been given a chance. Decision on adoption of a correct model is the responsibility of the elected leaders. All of us always have sworn by such intentions, little has been done as a start. Given a chance, the surge of development will sweep out all hindrances, including that of religion, if it turns out to be one.

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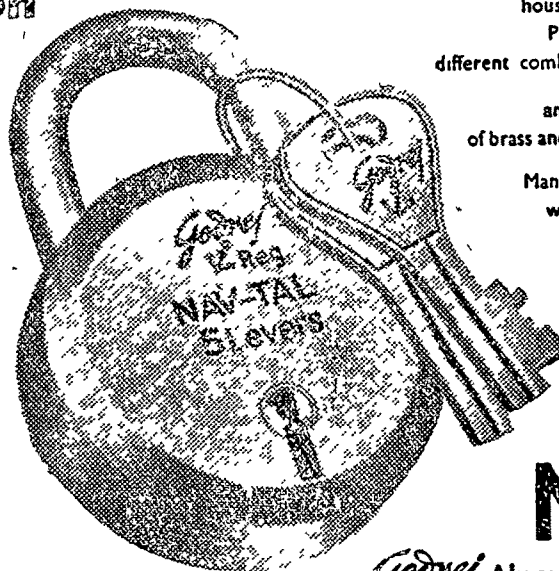
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Books

**SOCIETY AND CHANGE: ESSAYS IN HONOUR
OF SACHIN CHAUDHURI** by K.S. Krishnaswamy, Ashok Mitra, I.G. Patel, K.N. Raj, M.N. Srinivas (editors). Oxford University Press, India.

THIS volume contains a collection of 21 essays in honour of the late Sachin Chaudhuri, founder editor of the *Economic Weekly*, Bombay, and of its successor, the *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay. The contributors evidently share the late editor's sceptical attitudes towards ideas, institutions and policies and take the reader on a competently conducted tour around major themes in history (3 essays), sociology (mostly of the political kind) (9 essays), institutional economics or theory of

economic policy (5 essays), economic policy (2 essays) and demography (1 essay).

A glance at the list of contents shows that the range of issues is wide. It is so wide, in fact, that it is impossible to do justice to all the issues in a short review, especially if the reviewer is unwilling to express unqualified admiration or indulge in unqualified denunciation as is sometimes done by 'committed' crusaders. (An extreme example of this kind of writing is the remark by Joan Robinson in her essay on the choice of technique (on p. 169) that 'pre-Keynesian mainstream doctrine' makes economists believe that 'What is profitable is right'. It does no such thing, and to say it does is only to obfuscate issues). So the best

thing to do in the circumstances is to try to acquaint the reader with what is new in some of these essays, and to pose a few questions.

It is a feature of quite a few of these contributions that issues of high contemporary interest are discussed from a *dissident* view-point, going against the main current of contemporary opinion.

William Newell's piece on Durkheim's 'administrative syndicalism' is an example. We live in an age where recognition of the inevitability of the class struggle as a driving force of social change, and some sort of 'commitment' to it, is very fashionable. But here we have Newell's well-argued hypothesis that 'the moral nature of social groups is a more reliable indicator of the direction of industrial change than a purely economic theory of social conflict' (p. 42). At the very least, the argument is likely to make converts to the third view that recognition of classes and class conflict is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for deciphering the processes of social change.

Another is F. G. Bailey's empirically based hypothesis in an essay entitled 'The Distribution of Altruism', that 'to concentrate on *community* development and to focus upon existing communities may be to launch the attack on the best-defended position which is the most conservative and the least open to rapid renegotiation' (p. 58). This should induce rethinking on the ill-fated Indian 'community development' projects, as well as on the much idealized Chinese communes, whether or not we accept Bailey's conclusion that 'there is likely to be more flexibility in smaller units, such as the family'.

K. N. Raj's piece on Louis Bonaparte makes the interesting point, well documented but perhaps a little over-emphasised, that Louis Bonaparte was not really just a windbag but one who had 'allowed his programme for the eradication of pauperism to die a natural death (but) did manage to mount a programme of public works along different lines and thereby promote the development of industry' (p. 72). It should help clarify a slightly nebulous Marxian concept of Bonapartism or Napoleonism in terms of the class interests served by Bonapartism in the European context.

Rajni Kothari's 'Redesigning the Development Strategy' also expresses one important dissident view, even though it is elaborated only in a footnote (n 2, p. 97). He warns, by implication if not explicitly, against the agitation for closing down schools or making them unworkable in some developing countries in recent years on the ground that no education is better than 'elitist' education. It actually plays into the hands of the existing educated upper-class elites who can then monopolise the advantages of education which is the 'major avenue of (social) mobility' for the economically weak and socially handicapped strata (p. 86).

S. R. Sen in his piece on the 'Politics of Austerity', which is a response to A. K. Das Gupta's advocacy of 'de-centralization based on a community-based choice in planning' will make latter-day utopians uncomfortable. He points out that such a system established in contemporary China bears a close resemblance to Lycurgus' system in ancient Sparta and Lenin's Russia, which '...over time powerful social and political forces subverted'. What is the guarantee that the same fate will not meet Mao Tse-tung's experiment 'as the usual decadence sets in with the passage of time?' (p. 111). His answer seems to be that the over-all control of the 'masses' and planning from 'bottom to top' can only be maintained if the institutional frame-work allows various countervailing forces to operate (p. 119). But this is almost the polar opposite of Das Gupta's panacea, based on his somewhat touching faith in the adequacy of the ethics of co-operation as against competition (or emulation) as the basis of socialism (p. 107).

Three essays by I. G. Patel, Nigel Harris and T. Scarlett Epstein, express strongly unorthodox views on matters which have been much discussed in recent years. I. G. Patel emphasises that any planning strategy must be based on the doctrine of 'walking on both legs', e.g., agriculture as well as industry, exports as well as home production, light as well as heavy industries. The issues are *not* 'either-or', not even when we want to stress that planning must uplift the poorest strata. 'For most societies, the struggle for growth as well as for a better distribution or its costs and benefits is likely to require efforts in the same direction for social and institutional reform' (p. 127). The real danger is that 'both growth and provision of basic needs become mere slogans supported by token or sporadic efforts' (p. 128).

Harris's piece is even more forthright in warning against an idealisation of 'de-urbanisation' (whether in China or, presumably in Kampuchea) under cover of radical rhetoric. For, such idealisation is either an escape from the responsibility to 'generate jobs and incomes' wherever feasible, or an attempt to 'indulge in visions of the city or town beautiful to the benefit of the richer citizens' (p. 143). Scarlett Epstein's 18-page essay is an elaboration, on the basis of empirical data (as well as a useful chart on p. 257), of the argument that 'only when people can begin to be able to influence their own lives — i.e., when they cease to have generally to accommodate to circumstances beyond their control — can they be expected to *plan* their fertility' (p. 253). However, exactly how 'de-centralised development' on the basis of the 'Gandhian model' of small self-sufficient communities will bring about this change in attitude is not discussed.

Two other essays in the collection will be of special interest to readers for very different reasons. The first of these is the essay by Romila Thapar with the title, 'Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History'. Its thesis is that recent work in the

disciplines of archaeology, linguistics and social anthropology should help historians (and laymen) to discard once and for all the 'Aryan theory' and the theory of 'Oriental despotism' (and the associated theory of the 'Asiatic mode of production'). They are nothing more than intrusions into the understanding of Indian history of (false) 'ideologies pertinent to nineteenth century Europe' (p.14). The evidence cited will impress, but what exactly should be discarded is not very clear. It is easy to agree with the author that the Indus civilisation rather than the Vedic Aryan culture should now be regarded as the starting-point of Indian history (p.8). But the author's complaint on p.15 that 'the perennial search for the "Aryans" continues apace' may make an unwary reader start believing what the author probably does not want him to believe, viz., that there was no Aryan conquest of India at all.

Similarly, the author gives quite convincing reasons as to why the hypotheses of Oriental Despotism and the Asiatic mode of production hypotheses are irrelevant for understanding Indian history. But in stressing the continuity between the Indus civilisation and the 'Aryan' civilisation, Romila Thapar is giving some support to the nineteenth century hypothesis about the 'essentially 'unchanging character' of Indian society. The point is important. For the main purpose of the admittedly oversimplified Marxian hypothesis of Oriental Despotism superimposed on the Asiatic mode of production was precisely to explain this 'unchanging character' in order to identify the possible instruments of change.

The second essay of special interest is Ashok Mitra's irreverent piece on Sachin Chaudhuri entitled 'Notes on a Feudal Hobo'. From this piece, as from another on Sachin Chaudhuri, 1904-1966, by Rama Varma, we come to know a great deal about the man being honoured. But Ashok Mitra's piece is also a serious, or at least a half-serious exercise in unravelling the feudal social archetype in East Bengal. It is just possible that his account of the mutations of the lumpen or 'footloose' feudal Brahmin landlords will bear scrutiny even by earnest sociologists busy making case-studies. But the tour de force about the courteous ways of the uprooted feudal landlord, that infinite patience bred from the days of communal living at the dawn of civilisation (p.318), may not. But, of course this must be the kind of joke which endeared Sachin Chaudhuri and Ashok Mitra to each other.

Arun Bose

URBAN MOBILITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES by P G Patankar Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1978.

TRANSPORT by Madhoo Pavaskar Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1978

There are three aspects of urban development that are pre-eminently important and interesting:

shelter, jobs and urban mobility. It is not too much to say that none of these aspects of urban development will even be thoroughly comprehended by anyone who has not looked at them together and carefully examined their interdependence. The two books being reviewed are, in this light, slight monographs, the one, *Transport*, an apologetic attempt at speculating on the national transport scene in the year 2000, and the other, *Urban Mobility in Developing Countries*, an explication and generalisation of the author's experiences in Bombay.

Patankar's book is most informative when he speaks with obvious authority about the bus transport system (Chapters 6 & 7). I found this down-to-earth attitude encouraging good husbandry rather than planning grand schemes a healthy antidote to the vision of autobahns and sophisticated underground rail systems that are instantly conjured up by transportation planners. In comparison, the rest of the book appears to be a sketchy generalisation repeating well known facts. Dr. Patankar is currently with the Delhi Transport Undertaking, and there is evidence from current newspaper reports that he is trying to implement his pragmatic ideas to make the bus service more efficient. From these chapters in his book it is clear that Dr Patankar has a great deal to contribute.

But basic irritants in his generalisations remain. For example, he summarises, 'In short, metropolitan areas should have a mass transport system built around a hard core of rail rapid transit, *preferably underground* (my italics), tied to feeder bus routes, supplemented by express bus operations in routes of less traffic density' (p.17).

In most developing economies and urban morphologies, this would be prohibitively expensive and unrealistic. The Calcutta subway is anticipated to cost Rs. 9000 millions.

One of the problems, perhaps, is that Patankar draws analogies from his experiences in Bombay. Bombay is atypical. It is a densely populated, linear city, amenable to the running of an efficient mass transport system built around a 'hard core of rail rapid transit, preferably underground .. etc.' Delhi, for instance, presents very different problems with its low densities and concentric growth. Catering to Delhi's urban sprawl necessitates as great an effort at land use planning to redefine the parameters of the transportation problem, as the effort it would take to tackle the transportation problem itself. Besides stating that such links and inter-dependences in the total planning framework should exist, not much else is articulated.

Pavaskar's *Transport* is the outcome of a study carried out by the Tata Economic Consultancy Services in 1975 as a part of the Second India Studies — alluding to the doubling of population in the next 25-30 years. It attempts to draw 'quantitative and qualitative scenarios of the transport sector' in the year 2000.

Futurology is an exciting discipline that can soar to the limits of human intelligence it can also be, of course, the plain projection of past trends. While one can border on science fiction, the other, in these fast changing times, can become irrelevant. Pavaskar's study tends to be the latter. It loses the forest in the trees. While acknowledging the inevitable oil shortages, it nevertheless extrapolates fantastic growth of road transport. It is too ingenious to aver

'For the purpose of the present exercises, however, we ignore all possible technological changes which may bring about a major structural transformation in the fuel consumption pattern in Second India. The reason is obvious. There is really no way of projecting the precise natures of such changes in future and of assessing their impact on the fuel consumption pattern in 2000. Consequently, we tacitly assume no changes in the current fuel consumption norms of different transport modes — an assumption which seems patently false but which at the same time is rather unavoidable at this stage. The estimates of fuel requirement of the transport sector presented here should therefore be viewed with much suspicion and caution. The only reason for indulging in such an exercise, though absurd, is that it indicates, in broad terms, the magnitude of the fuel problem which the transport sector may face in Second India, if fuel efficiency is not improved and new sources of fuel are not discovered before the turn of the century' (p 89). And yet he predicts that 'for the first time after nearly a century, railways will lose their premier position in Indian transportation, and roads will occupy instead the pride of place. At least two-thirds of the combined passenger traffic on rail and road and nearly three-fifths of the freight traffic on them, will be carried by road transport services in 2000' (p 100). These equivocations and qualifications weaken a potentially interesting and useful study.

In conclusion, the issues in transportation remain unanswered, partly because the interdependence between the various aspects of urban development are not taken into account, and partly because the authors have not addressed themselves to the task. In the year 2000, with known fuel resources depleted, what, indeed, are the transportation alternatives? Planning is not projection. However, the transport planners' natural inclination appears to be to predict ever increasing traffic. Consequently, they indulge in greater investments that generate, in turn, greater demands. A socially desirable balance between requirements and provision for the movement of people and goods, given the limited resources which could otherwise be used to build houses, increase jobs, etc., need to be examined and articulated. Besides discernable demand, what are the needs for transportation, which would lead to questions of equity, which are invariably ignored in the face of well defined economic and engineering parameters. Do we plan for the poor, or must the transportation system be 'viable'? Of course, the two need not be mutually exclusive.

What does transportation do to the environment? The authors of these books could have addressed themselves to these related issues in the absence of which their books retain very limited relevance

A G. Krishna Menon

ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT: APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

Edited by Marc Nerfin.
Published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation,
Uppsala, Sweden, 1977.

QUESTIONING DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH

EAST ASIA, Edited by Nancy Cling. Published
by Select Books on behalf of South East Asia
Study Group, Singapore, 1977.

OVER the past three decades practically every country in the world has experienced an unprecedented increase in material production and prosperity largely as a result of a more complete exploitation of the technical developments in production, transport and communications that have cumulated since the eighteenth century. Yet, today, many people feel that something has gone wrong somewhere and that the life styles and production structures which are emerging are not conducive to welfare in its widest sense. Both the books under review reflect this new orthodoxy in development studies.

The first book, published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation consists of two parts — one dealing with the conceptual framework for analysing development strategies and the second with the specific experience of Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Tunisia and India.

The principal objective of the essays dealing with the conceptual framework is to focus attention on certain elements that tend to be ignored in development analysis. Because under-development is seen basically as an economic problem, the language and the conceptual structure of development studies is dominated by magnitudes like national income, material production, rates of investment and savings, employment, etc. Even when some attempt was made to study elements like the income distribution which are determined essentially by social and political factors, analysis tended to conceptualise problems in terms of variations in Gini coefficients or shifts in the Lorenz curve.

This, however, is true mostly for those who swear by quantitative methods and universally applicable models. Fortunately, there has always been, in India at least, a persistent bias in favour of 'institutional' economics in which problems say of land relations are analysed not in terms of land and labour 'markets' but in terms of relations between classes of individuals and the way in which these relations impinge on development tasks.

The conceptual framework outlined in the Hammarskjöld Foundation volume focuses attention on elements like life style, the mode of organisation of production, political institutions and the distribution of authority which, though studied by sociologists and political theorists, have seldom been taken into account explicitly in the formulation of development strategies. Basically, every act of production or consumption or exchange is an act of will and as men, in the exercise of their will, are constrained not merely by the usual magnitudes that economists put into the Lagrangean but also by values, conventions and coercion, the need to integrate economic, political and social analysis is clear. But, the belief that such comprehensive analysis is needed as a basis for development planning rests on the false presumption that such planning is 'total' and seeks to solve all development problems. Most planners are more modest and see themselves only as one element in a complex structure of decision-making. Though planners may only be economic technicians, social and political forces influence development plans not because development theories take them into account but because planning is a political process.

The papers in the Hammarskjöld Foundation volume go beyond a statement of methodological principles, they go into substantive questions of means and ends. Marc Nerfin, the editor of the volume describes 'Another Development' as need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on structural transformations. This description is amplified by Cardoso, the eminent Brazilian economist, who focuses attention on distributional issues and in a chilling phrase describes our present condition as '... a civilisation of poverty for the majority and fear for all'. The real meat in this book is in the second half which deals with the experience of five countries. Two of the five studies which deal with Brazil and Mexico are very thorough. The Brazilian case study demonstrates the failure of peripheral rightism and the Mexican study that of peripheral leftism. The Mexican study is particularly interesting because it demonstrates that land reforms by themselves are not sufficient to alter the pattern of development and that they must be part of an overall approach that stresses distributive justice and self-reliance in every sector of activity. The papers on India, Chile and Tunisia deal not so much with the past but are, collectively, some sort of manifesto for 'Another Development'. The paper on India is actually Rajni Kothari's report as Convener of the Group on Rural Development of the NCST.

The second book under review has been published on behalf of the South East Asia Study Group which seems to be supported by some not very well known US and Japanese Foundations. The essays deal mostly with the question of social values in a very imprecise and vague fashion exemplified by one essay titled 'Values and the Development Process: Some General Considerations'. The only ex-

ceptions are three essays on Singapore — one dealing with mental health, one with alienated youth and one with the status of women.

Nitin Desai

DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE by Chandra Shekhar
Published by Popular Prakashan, 1978

THE fact that the author is the present Janata Party President, is no doubt the basic reason behind the timing of this book's publication. That is as it should be. The chief merit of such books is that we have an insight into the basic framework of thought which guides some of our principal political figures and can measure the consistency and integrity of their political careers. The book does not provide any deep analysis of forces of social change at work in Indian society, their evolution, structural contradictions, uneasy co-existence, etc. As such the title of this book is a misnomer. Apart from the editor's introduction by Brahmanand, this is a collection of short (lightweight in analytical terms) pieces, written by Chandra Shekhar for the party paper, *Young Indian*, stretching from 1969 to 1975. At the end of the book is a speech and an interview in early 1975, which sheds interesting light on Chandra Shekhar's response to the evolving JP movement.

Unfortunately, the articles are not arranged systematically, neither chronologically nor content-wise. Nevertheless, certain basic themes which have clearly been motivating factors in Chandra Shekhar's thinking, can be clearly discerned. Foremost among these are his antagonism to the growing concentration of economic power by monopoly houses and the failure to implement genuine land reform policies. These articles do nothing to alter the image of Chandra Shekhar as a 'radical' within the Congress fold. It has been the peculiar characteristic of the Congress Party that it has always been able to house individuals and groups with a pronounced radical ideology which is by its very nature *fundamentally* hostile to the views of another section of the same party. While considering himself a Gandhian, Chandra Shekhar is never quite able to resolve the contradiction between the Gandhian prescriptions of 'trusteeship' of the rich for the poor and his own proclivities towards acceptance of a basic and inherently violent rich-poor divide. So, whereas *garibi hatao* was the favoured slogan of the Congress Party during 1971, Chandra Shekhar insisted, to much opposition, that *amrit hatao* was the logical corollary.

The writings fulfil two functions. First, they continuously *expose* the behaviour of government and administration and show how vested interests and powerful exploiting groups are succoured. This is particularly the case with the relationship between monopolies and government bodies such as financing agencies, licensing departments, etc., who come in for some of Chandra Shekhar's heaviest fire.

Second there is the consistent *restatement* of basic 'socialist ideals' and the 'socialist programme' against all the twists and turns that policies and policy declarations by the Congress have taken. Central to his conception of the socialist programme is State control of the 'commanding heights' of the economy, severe curbs on big business, genuine implementation of a rural programme similar to China's stress on balanced rural development and the promotion of private enterprise at the lower levels.

The weakest part of Chandra Shekhar's thinking emerges in his uncertainty as to how mass involvement and mass control of the tendencies towards the misuse of power at the top can be established within the framework of parliamentary democracy. That is, how to bridge the gap between intention and implementation. In the later pieces, Chandra Shekhar hints at the increasing tendencies towards centralization of power and suppression of dissent within Indira's Congress. Yet, he continues to cherish the hope that the Congress can retain its Gandhian and socialist heritage. Thus, while sympathetic to the JP movement which he characterizes as a justifiable mass response to corruption and abuse of power by politicians, he initially calls for a dialogue between the Congress and the JP movement. Even when it is too late for dialogue, he argues that the Congress must fulfil its promises so as to gain credibility for a dialogue.

On the whole though, the book will certainly enhance the reputation of the Janata Party President. Unlike many others, Chandra Shekhar's greatest merit until now has been the consistency and integrity of his thinking, amply revealed in this book. How he can now reconcile himself to working with groups and elements in the Janata Party, e.g., Desai and the Jana Sangh, whom he has always characterized as 'rightist', is a question yet to be answered.

Mention has not been made so far of Brahmanand's lengthy and excellent introduction. It is worth buying the book for the introduction alone. Partly based on Chandra Shekhar's insights while in the top ranks of the Congress, Brahmanand traces a fascinating picture of the conflicts that led to the 1969 split, Chandra Shekhar siding with Mrs Gandhi and the subsequent emergence of 'extra constitutional centres of power' around the PM. The major culprit in this centralization prior to the Emergency was the PM's Secretariat whose increased powers were first initiated by P N. Haksar. This set dictatorial decision-making patterns. From a subjective point of view it is easy to see how Mrs Gandhi could view with equanimity the suspension of formal democratic procedures via a declaration of Emergency. In many ways, it was only an extension to the larger society of a process that already existed internally within the Congress Party.

POVERTY, PLANNING AND INFLATION by **C.N. Vakil** Allied Publishers

PROFESSOR Vakil is well known in economic circles in India and to a certain extent abroad as well. The genesis of his book which is a collection of essays written over a period of fifty years, is in effect the problem of development or rather development strategies initiated and pursued by successive Congress governments at the Centre since Independence. Within the spectrum of developmental problems faced by the Indian economy, Vakil introduces among others, such pieces as a *repartee* with Gandhiji over India's poverty, a technical paper on development and his 1973 projected outlook on expected political and economic formations within the Indian economy.

The two pronged crux of Vakil's argument is that (a) in India, political problems gain precedence over economic issues; and (b) the private sector or rather the so-called monopoly houses within the private-sector are subject to an unnecessary and self-defeating -- in terms of economic progress -- attack by jingoistic power hungry 'red' politicians who cry wolf any time these elements within the private sector progress. This fact is not only retarding possibilities of balanced development but is also strengthening the levers of authoritarianism and communism etc. He goes on to support these views with a scenario of a 'New Social Order' which he feels began to unfold around 1973 and which epitomises all that is (or rather, was!) wrong with Congress politics.

Within the gamut of all the projections contained in 316 pages, the point is made, namely, that the movement for development embodies a value judgement with which few would disagree: the desirability of overcoming malnutrition, poverty and disease which are the most immediate and widespread aspects of human suffering. In positive terms, some advocate a commitment to development that transcends the limiting terms of economic growth to embrace such features of social justice as equality of opportunity, full employment, generally available social services, equitable distribution of income and basic political freedoms.

In terms of these, a broad consensus may be discernible, but such an agreement on desired ends does not necessarily take us far in understanding the realities of contemporary India. Statements issuing from politicians and planners, bankers and businessmen, academics and experts of many description, point to a wide variety of assumptions, interests and concerns, as well as actual proposals. The issues of development in India have political ramifications of far-reaching significance, not surprisingly their consideration entails intellectual controversy. The naive plea that the brutal data of human deprivation on such a scale should somehow be 'above' politics displays both a wilful disregard of the nature of entrenched inequality and a denial

of the materials from which politics might be created. The same is true of the technocratic approach which sees the achievement of development as dependent on the abstract rationality of techniques of forecasting, allocation and appraisal, free from the 'interference' of politics. Both views — misconstrued assertions on behalf of the qualities of 'heart' and 'mind' — are grossly inadequate to the extreme responsibilities of effective analysis and action that have to be faced.

To pursue the meaning of development specially within the Indian context, therefore, is not to initiate an exercise in semantics but is a necessary first step in thinking clearly about the range of situations, problems and possibilities subsumed in the uses of the term. Modes of definition embody particular assumptions and concerns and give rise to particular methods and uses. It is one of the peculiarities of social science that its concepts and the activities of its practitioners themselves enter the field of study. Nowhere is this more true than in development studies where the most pressing of human needs and the conceptions of the development professional — academic, consultant, planner and administrator — confront each other.

Iqbal Chand Malhotra

THE BANYAN TREE: Overseas Immigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh by Hugh Tinker.
Oxford University Press. 1977

'TO study a banyan tree, you not only must know its main stem in its own soil, but also trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like the Banyan tree can live and grow by spreading abroad — not the political India, but the ideal India'.

This opening quote from Tagore, sets the tone for Hugh Tinker's, by and large, meticulously researched study of Indian emigration

That, loss of caste notwithstanding, there have been travellers from the Indian subcontinent to countries of both east and west, from at least as early as the 3rd century, has been proved quite conclusively by travellers' accounts, evidence of trade and commerce, religious influences, and so on. We also know that in the case of the last two, these activities ultimately led to some kind of permanent Indian settlement abroad, and that by the time 19th century European explorers like Burton discovered Africa they were guided in the interior of that great continent by Indian merchants

But emigration, with the characteristics we now associate with it (those of mass movement and mass settlement) was a nineteenth century phenomenon, when Indians arriving abroad were not merely passengers or individual travellers but mil-

lions of indentured labourers and others, press-ganged into leaving their homes. This movement pushed westwards, towards Africa and the Middle-East so far as north India was concerned, and east-wards, towards Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia, so far as the south was concerned. Although indentured emigration ended by 1916, this outward swing had already gained sufficient momentum to ensure that emigration, in significant numbers, continued. Labourers for the tea and rubber plantations of Ceylon and Malaysia, for the Uganda Railway, for canals and mines in South Africa and traders — the *duka wallas* of Kenya, the chettiyars of Burma — were the two most important classifications for Indian emigrants till the '50s and '60s; and it was these occupations that were responsible for the two most popularly-held views of them that of exploiters, in collusion with the local colonial power, or of toadies, kowtowing to the same colonials, with little shame and even less self-respect. For professional observers of race relations, however, the most widely-held is Tagore's view that of Indians taking their India with them, recreating new Indian colonies wherever they settle. Another view, less current, sees Indians as always victims of circumstances in their adopted countries, their role there determined by the host society's attitudes towards them.

Hugh Tinker gives credence to both views. Considering the facts, it is difficult not to agree with him. In South Africa, the Indians (3 per cent of the population) are desperately poor, a buffer between the blacks and whites, 'permanently second-class', says the author, but in reality, abysmally backward. The South Africans (themselves originally, an immigrant community) have throttled them economically with restrictive Trade Licensing Acts, decreed zoning for residential purposes and, through a series of concerted moves, sabotaged any attempt at independence made by them. Viewed always as intruders or transients at best, they were repatriated in large numbers during 1927-33. Although, via Gandhi and the Indian freedom struggle, a few faltering moves were made for some kind of political representation, they received the most strident opposition, their party was banned, and they are now reduced to 'a politics of mendicancy'. Worse, they are citizens of an illegal regime, with limited acceptance outside.

Ceylon, after independence, has had an official, long-term policy of repatriation for its (largely) Tamil Indian population. With the declaration of Sinhala as the national language, and the lack of educational facilities on the estates, the efforts at assimilation have become more and more tenuous.

If one should imagine that it was their lack of economic clout that led to the Indians in South Africa and Ceylon being trodden underfoot, then their experience in Burma and East Africa belies this theory. Commercially dominant in Kenya and Uganda, and controlling 50 per cent of the banking and finance — and rural credit — in Burma, the

Indians in both countries, received the most summary treatment of all: orders to march. In both cases, it was clearly their political naivete, their lack of identification with the national cause prior to independence, that led to their rejection. In this instance, at least, their refusal to loosen their ties with the homeland led them, quite literally, into a no-man's-land, shuttled back and forth between countries.

Where the immigrant Indian community has embraced the adopted country as its own, its role is the most successful. Indians were in the forefront during the independence struggle in Mauritius, and have consistently educated themselves within the prevailing system — an important step towards true assimilation. Even in countries like Trinidad, where they are one among many communities, their identification with the country has, at least, made them equal partners. This aspect is important. In Malaysia, for example, where Indians are professionally dominant and make up about 50 per cent of the essential services, and are trade union leaders, their utter detachment from the politics of the country and its nationalist sentiments has led to their being relegated to what Tinker terms, 'an auxiliary'. The Chinese, on the other hand, also an immigrant community, and commercially dominant, are a much more important feature of national life.

Singularly non-committal is the author in his discussion of Indians in Britain. Although he admits that since the creation of the Race Relations Board in 1965, 'racial prejudice has been accepted as a component of British life', he offers few insights into the problem — for a problem it certainly is. While acknowledging that immigrant labour is vital to certain spheres of activity (without them, there would be no night-shift), that they are potentially, politically important (the labour victory in 1974 was considerably boosted by the immigrant vote), that professionally and, lately, commercially, they are coming into their own (whither NHS without the Indian doctor?), Britain is still struggling with its goal of integration as opposed to multi-racialism. It is true that Indians in Britain have clung as tenaciously to their culture as the British have steadfastly tried to sandpaper it down and the effort at integration has not been helped by the Indians' generally unflattering opinion of their hosts. It is odious to make comparisons, but at this point one starts wishing for an Oscar Lewis approach to the subject: an intimate, cultural, psychological and sociological study, focusing on the heart of the matter, the people themselves, immigrants and locals.

For, the weakness in studies like Tinker's is not that they are incomplete, or casually documented, or even insincere. Far from it. It is just that, in the end, those basic, time worn questions continue to tantalise. Are deteriorating race relations a matter of race or class? Of occupations or attitudes? Of quantity or quality? Of cultural chauvinism or national paranoia? Of black or white? For if there is one thing that comes through quite clearly it is,

that in all these centuries, probably the only Indian immigrants to escape opprobrium were the Buddhists.

Ritu Menon

DEMOCRATIC POLITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

IN INDIA: Crisis and Opportunities by Rajni Kothari. Allied Publishers.

SYMPTOMS OF FASCISM by Arun Shourie
Vikas Publication, 1978

IN the current bout of political reappraisal — these occur periodically and have long ceased to be agonising — we are again preoccupied with the defects inherent in our structure. Periodicals seem to be endlessly running features which are entitled typically 'Is our political structure cracking up?' or 'Are we fit for democracy?' It does not seem to strike the editors of these worthy publications to ask whether 'Is Democracy Fit For Us?' After all, have we not shown the world our superiority in working our system in the last elections by rejecting non-democratic values even though the promise of steady supply of bread and sustenance seemed such an attractive alternative. Even the foreign Cassandra could not help being impressed with our so-called poor, illiterate electorate, showing such high concern for lofty democratic ideals. They might well begin to wonder whether we do not deserve a better system than the standard western type of parliamentary democracy.

Fortunately, to stimulate our thinking we have authors like Rajni Kothari who is nothing if not lucid and prolific, without outraged feelings to drive the mighty engines of thought. He is cool, dispassionate, objective in discovering that our political system is in a bad shape and that political entrepreneurs to build a new society are not emerging. He notes more in anguish than in anger, that the intellectual elite seems to have lost its moorings and there is no longer the will to struggle for freedom, self realisation of the individual, justice in the arrangement of society and participation in decision making. The sorrow, if it could express itself, is because 'modern India is the product of its intellectuals who articulated its goals and values and set up standards of performance for the society as a whole'. But they made an initial error of accepting a model of economic modernisation which was borrowed almost indiscriminately from the western experience. The high density of population with under-employment, the destructiveness of colonialism on the existing industrial set-up were all ignored to shape ourselves in the image of a modern industrial society.

With what results? The inherent faults in our system have begun to surface now. (After all, the founders ignored India's own tradition of an apolitical, parochially structured, hierarchically

oriented, and essential iniquitous social order.) We have a crisis in our polity and the concomitant economic crisis. These are practically his words. But then he goes on to elaborate and in the process of elaboration suggests that the crisis is basically economic with a concomitant political crisis. 'Naturally, the situation poses enormous problems — mounting unemployment, increasing poverty, a politically conscious electorate demanding their due, and a morally angry younger generation clamouring for change. This is what the economic model we adopted has produced. Naturally the elites — even the earnest ones among them — find themselves unable to cope with this situation, prisoners as they are of the very structure they have created. Unable to fathom the sources of the present confusion, everyone takes recourse to short-cuts, ad hoc decisions (mostly no decisions). But how is poverty to be removed in a system whose very logic is to breed it? And how to 'increase production'? And production of what — more cars and ownership flats, plastics and synthetics, hotels and aeroplanes, and superfine textiles? Given the present model and the relationship between production and distribution, in a word, given the western style of industrialisation that we are pursuing, we shall produce nothing but consumerism, corruption, revolts, disorder, and ultimately the collapse of the democratic order'

So, the crux of the problem is economic, and Kothari suggests various steps in order to move towards a new model. Steps such as (1) transforming the economic model, (2) revamping the educational system, (3) overhauling the administration. The vulgar reaction to this would be to say 'easier said than done' because he goes on listing a series of measures which would mean total recasting of the existing structures. He suggests, for instance, the provision of basic infrastructure of welfare in the form of free health services, minimum education, and nutritional standards for all.

However, he says correctly that what is needed is 'almost one of revamping the whole system at all levels and from a number of vantage points. For much has been lost in the past decade and it will not be enough to tinker with the mechanism on an ad hoc or piecemeal basis. The need is to remake the system through a comprehension of the whole and the interrelationships that make it a whole. This will entail not just the renewal of the system as it once prevailed but moving beyond it, by both correcting its inadequacies and devising new solutions called for by the new challenges.'

But the problem is not *what* — we are generally agreed on this — but *how*? How to provide the basic infrastructure of welfare, this is sadly missing.

Those who had read the three contributions of Arun Shourie, which form the leading half of *Symptoms of Fascism*, in the pages of SEMINAR will welcome the hard-cover format. These contributions

deserve re-presentation. One is all the more impressed that *The Coup as a Portent* was written in October 1975; *The Role of Popular Movements* in August 1975, and the major piece, *Symptoms* which runs to nearly a hundred pages, in May 1976. Whichever way one views it, this book is most worthwhile.

Even those who may disagree with the author's line of thought (or his approach) such as his faith in the masses, the role of the individual in giving impulse to historical processes, etc., will not question the ring of sincerity and verve of earnestness. If this is not a case of innocence betrayed leading to an outburst, it is a sustained and scholarly exercise in expression of anguish and concern in a forceful, forthright manner. At times he seems to by-pass a sense of balance in order to punch with greater force a point that he is pushing. At times he side-steps his academic discipline. But, one feels that certain allowances must be made in these contexts.

He traces Mrs Gandhi's paranoia to a feeling of insecurity arising from her background, her education, her upbringing, her social relationships and her doubts on the legitimacy of her position. He does not believe in giving quarter to people in the highest position of power for any dissimulation. There is even a chapter entitled 'Liar', an appropriate if unparliamentary word.

The main chapter 'Symptoms' which appeared in 1977 proved to be a scholarly study in the methods and mores of fascism as practised by Hitler and Mussolini, drawing out the striking parallelism with the local situation. It's too fresh to bear repetition now. Therefore, one may proceed to what is of long-term significance, i.e., his major thesis of social processes in our polity. He begins with the postulate of the *intermediate class* first set out by the Polish economist, Michael Kalecki. This class runs the State but it relies on industrial capitalists and large commercial interests for finance and on the rich peasantry for mobilising rural support.

But to get down to the beginning, Kalecki's three categories are: (1) the owners of the means of production — the capitalists and the rich peasantry, (2) the industrial and agricultural proletariat (some unorganised); (3) the intermediate class that lies between the other two classes. Some of them have tangible means of production, like skills: administrative, managerial, scientific, and some are organised.

Once you accept his postulates, the contradictions and the confusion existing in our polity for the past thirty years becomes manageably clear. For, as the author explains, the intermediate class is heterogeneous and it pursues contradictory objectives. On the one hand, it takes measures to improve its own power and economic status vis-a-vis the owner of the means of production and, on the other, because of its economic dependence on these very owners, it does not harm its patrons by failing to implement policies whole-heartedly which might prove to be too damaging.

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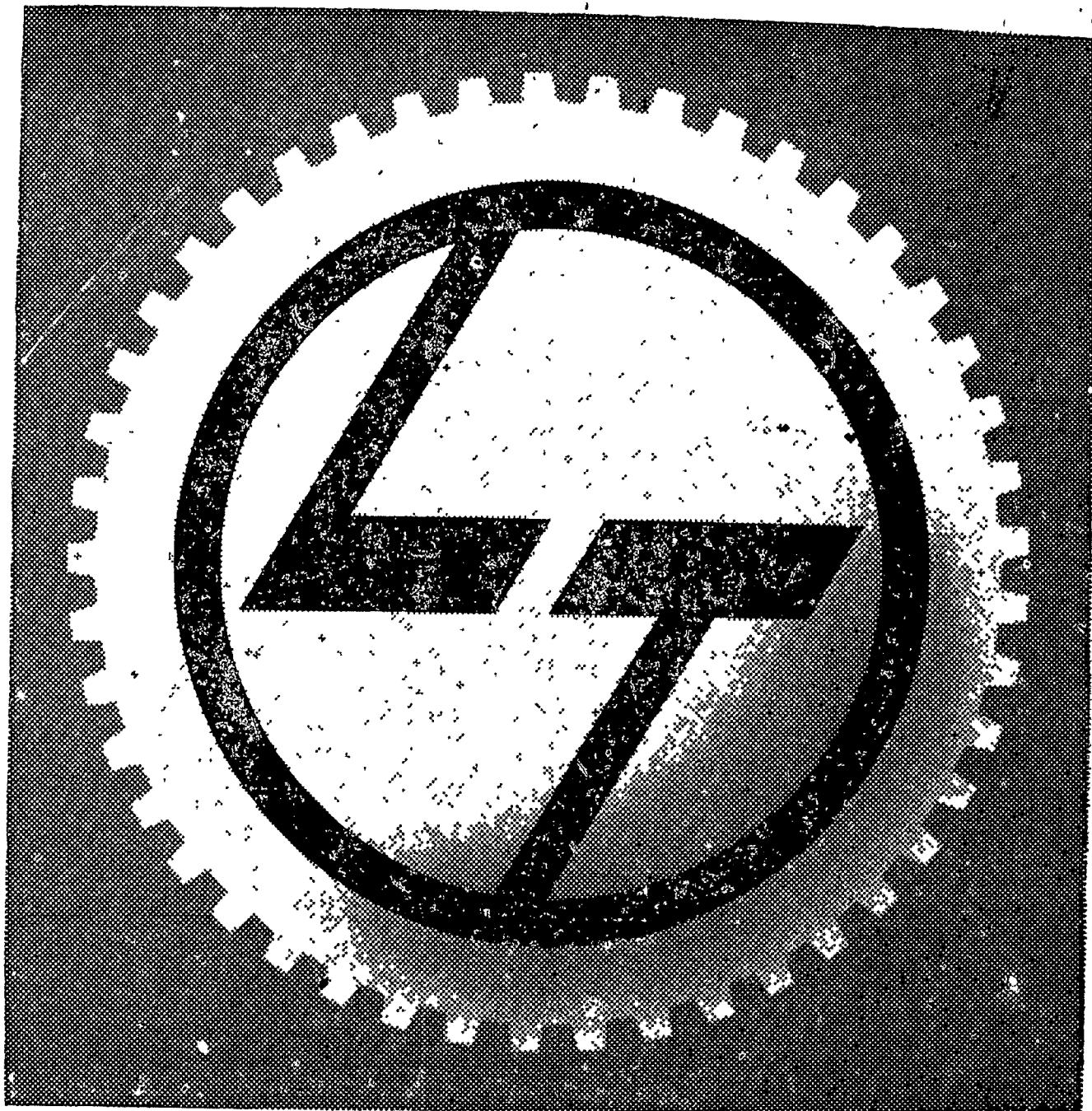
This explains how the acceptance of 'socialism' was totally misinterpreted and given an extraordinary direction because bureaucrats of the intermediate class utilised various instruments like the public sector, system of licences and quota, as patronage in their hands to bring the captains of industry and commerce running to them on their knees. They used very cleverly the socialist ambience to put the owners of the means of production on the defensive. On the other hand, by creating industrial controls and with their careful manipulation they provided a protected market with foreign and domestic competition eliminated for the owners of industry. Similarly, so far as the landed interests were concerned, the vast legislation on land reforms was carried out half-heartedly.

Equally telling is his critique of the intellectuals as a class. By and large they lack courage. He calls them fair-weather revolutionaries who run away at the slightest sign of squall. That is because the Indian intellectual is a product of the middle-class and therefore economically dependent on others. He finds it difficult to advocate measures that will eventually destroy his class—as he should. It is easy to coopt him into any given system of patronage and privilege, and thus convert him into an official or self-serving ideologue.

We are now living through an unexpected period of interregnum. The co-existence of different modes of production during the last three decades afforded a degree of autonomy—in this period. Those who manned the State apparatus, intellectuals and other members of this class, were able to manoeuvre and manipulate within a fairly wide terrain. The contradictions within the system have prevented adequate change for over a decade. 'The Emergency gave us a glimpse of the manner in which this stalemate is likely to be broken... the landed interests who, since Independence, had been acquiring control of the organisations of the Congress and a few other parties and, by the late 1960s, had captured these upto the State level, have now made a spectacular thrust, upto the national level. Along with the owners of industry, they are now poised to use the State apparatus openly and audaciously for their own purposes. Industrial and agricultural labour cannot be sat upon in this process. And that must inevitably entail curbs on the freedoms of speech, organization, etc.'

Again and again one is impressed by the analysis—right down to the chilling conclusion: the new rulers will certainly need agents but they will not find them in the middle class. 'They will find them among the lumpen, the toughs, who are completely bereft of values, of standards, who are completely alienated from the present set-up. To keep the people in line, the new rulers will need whips. The wet noodles of the middle class will not do.'

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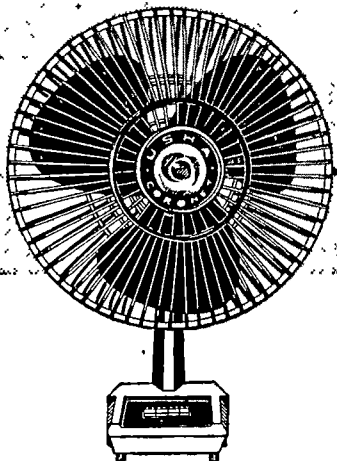
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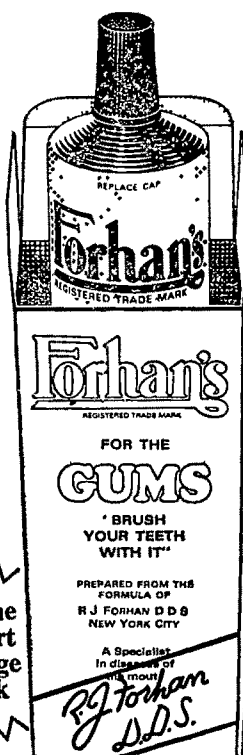
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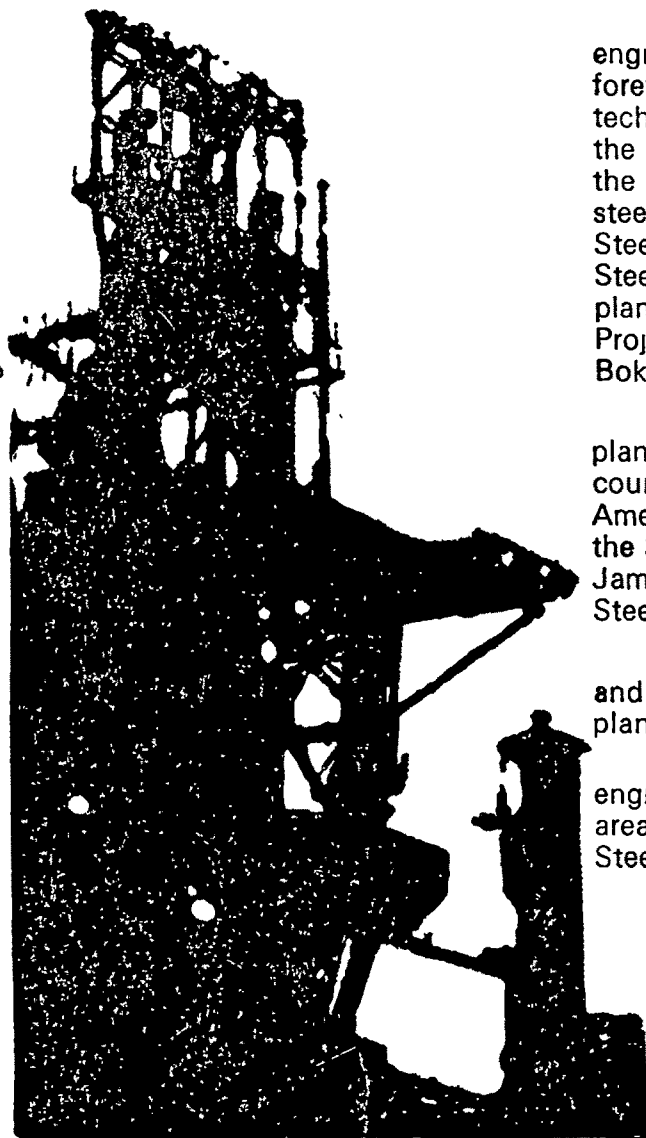


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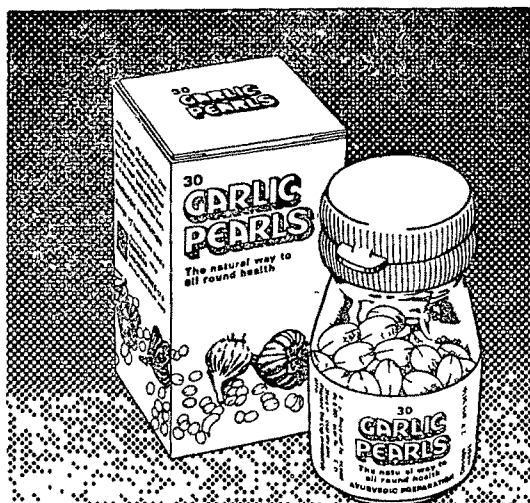
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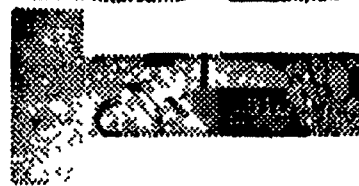
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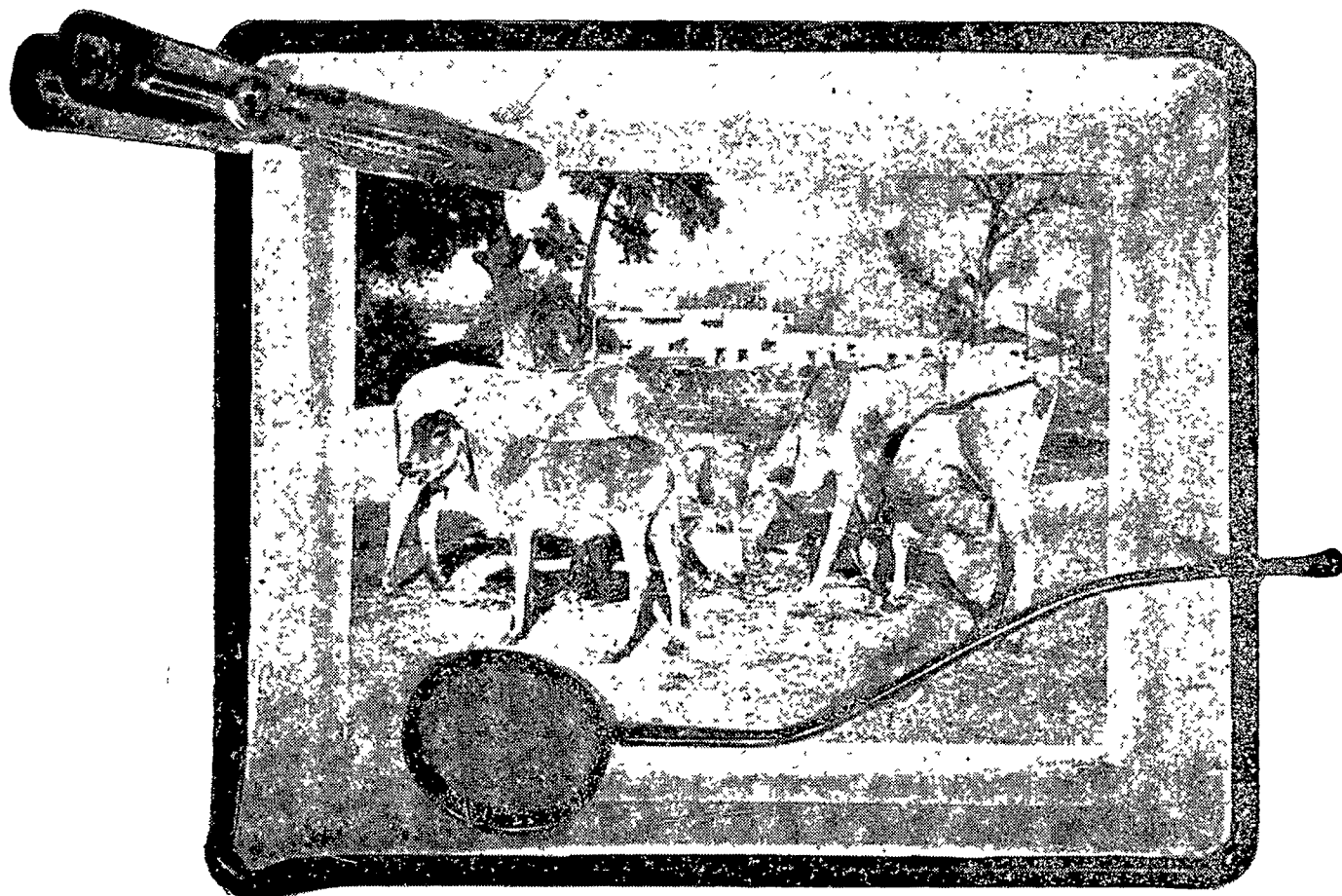
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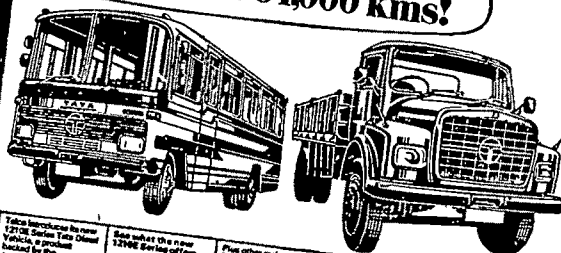
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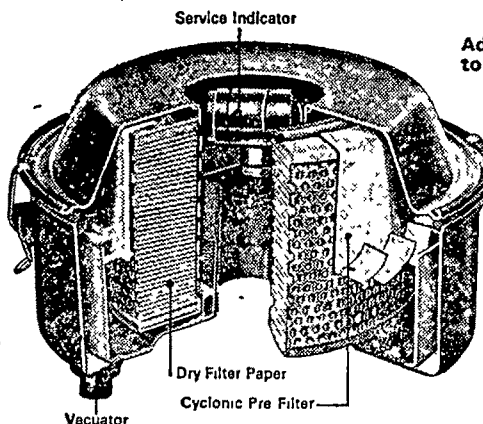


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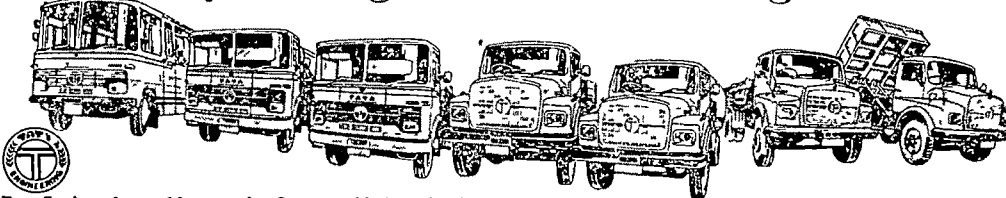
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COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

We are forever fretting over the quality of our administrators. India is a continent and the administrative challenge here has its own special flavour. So many centuries are telescoped into one. So many patterns of culture contest for survival, each as ancient as the other. And there are so many demands, ever-growing, on a resource pool that always seems inadequate. The thrust of programmes, which are the answer to the continental challenge, are always based on a set of priorities. Within these priorities are facets rooted in the regions which the administrator must interpret. The lazy, unthinking hierarchy of officials over decades has nourished on the harassment of power. This ugly face of the administrator, alas, continues to hover over the implementation of the programme. The frenzied search for contacts, for suction, for status, is a reflection of the battle to adjust with the power of the administrators, be he policeman, collector or governor. Every now and then we are reminded that the administrator has other tasks to perform, but the occasions are rare. As population mounts and the many inter-related crises of our lives are sketched in sharper and more traumatic strokes, with the institutions of democratic participation and the disciplines of self-regulation crumbling before the

pressure of the impatient, the frustrated, and the angry, it is of paramount concern that the problem of the administrator be understood in a wider social frame. This is not easy. So much of past practice encroaches upon the present, a feudal-colonial past that should have little relevance when we are seeking a social security based on a growing equality. This mess of habit assumes rigid postures, destroying our capacity to cope with the qualitatively different challenges of today. It cannot be wished away, or removed by a magic wand. It has to be re-cycled, re-processed by the hard work of experienced administrators determined to establish the new norms and frameworks. In our continental situation, it is possible easily to understand the need for decentralised democratic systems. But the details will only emerge after sustained and agonising search. The administrative machine is extraordinarily rich in a variety of experience, even though it may lack the moral fibre to survive emergency situations of extreme stress and strain. We have to catalyse this experience, and build more creative administrators to guide the democratic transformation of this complicated and confused land. There is no other way. And time is short.

Anatomy of mal-administration

B. B. VOHRA

THE public sector in India — comprising of the Government at the Centre and in the States, local authorities and public enterprises — employs nearly 14 million people, with a total wage bill of around Rs 9,000 crores per annum. By all accounts, the community is not getting its money's worth from this huge army of employees, who may be collectively described as the country's bureaucracy.

Our bureaucracy undoubtedly suffers from a large number of defects. Though not uniformly bad, it can in large parts be justly accused of being bloated, inefficient, undisciplined, self-seeking, slothful and venal. It is unused to functioning as a team, believes in narrow departmentalism and is given to intrigue, it is also insensitive to the needs of the citizen and more concerned with its own interests than with those of the tax payer. It is cynical, bereft of idealism and mercenary in outlook. Over the years, it has grown into a Franken-

stein which we are unable to control effectively. Small wonder that the word bureaucrat has become almost a term of abuse.

It is quite obviously necessary to improve the reliability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the bureaucracy so that it may become a fit instrument of good administration as well as of development and social change. Let us not forget that nearly half our people still exist below the line of absolute poverty and that tasks of a truly stupendous nature will need to be performed before we can hope to achieve even the minimum acceptable standards of nutrition, housing, employment, education and medical facilities for the entire nation. These tasks will become immeasurably more difficult as our population increases to around 1000 million by the year 2000 A.D.

How can the bureaucracy be improved in its working and made capable of shouldering its growing

responsibilities? The answer to this question lies in the improvement and revitalisation of the services which constitute the officer cadres that control the bureaucracy and but for whom, it would be nothing more than a rabble. The services are today in very poor shape indeed and as the report of the Shah Commission brings out in such vivid detail, have all but collapsed. It may be pointed out here that the services referred to by the Shah Commission are those concerned with the administration of law and order. However, since these are also the premier services in the country, their decline necessarily implies the decline of all other services also.

How can the services be revived and put back on their feet? Before one can answer this question, it is necessary to understand the reasons which have led to their decline in the first place. Whole volumes could be written on this subject but the basic reasons are no more than two — the character of the Indian people themselves and the inherent contradictions which exist between the demands of good administration, on the one hand, and those of the political system which we operate, on the other.

Let us first consider certain basic traits of character which are rooted in our history and culture and are reflected in the attitudes of the Indian people generally and therefore also of the members of our bureaucracy and the services. We are still essentially a feudal and socially undemocratic society with a callous disregard for the condition of the under-privileged and the poor. In spite of our priceless spiritual heritage, we are, in practice, worshippers of power and money. Centuries of insecurity and deprivation have made us excessively security-minded and we are unwilling to take risks for the sake of ideas. Centuries of slavery have also destroyed our self-respect — while we are excessively meek towards our superiors, we revel in bullying and bossing over those below us.

The Indian is not public-spirited by nature and is pre-occupied with the pursuit of personal and family

interests. We are also more than a little susceptible to caste and regional considerations. Our concept of the rights of the individual is weak to the point of being almost non-existent. We have little sense of fair play and justice and live happily with the notion that rules and regulations are made only for the ruled and not for the rulers. We worship the strong and the mighty and have no real attachment to the imported concept of the Rule of Law. Social evils like the dowry system grind us down and are an important cause of corruption. We excel in intrigues and factionalism and are better talkers than doers.

We are, in short, not at all the kind of people who would miss the absence of a good, impartial and cost-effective administration. We are also not made of the stuff required to run such an administration in a sustained manner — in fact we are too fragmented, selfish and self-centred a people to be capable of running any system for any length of time. The administrative system which the British created for us and which worked so well as long as they were here, was therefore bound to begin wilting as soon as we came into our own. This historical process was, however, hastened by the fact that the new rulers not only saw no great merit in the system but also instinctively recognised it as a great danger to their own way of life.

The deep-rooted antagonism which the unscrupulous politician bears towards the much-maligned bureaucrat is indeed inherent in the very nature of our political system. To appreciate this point, one has only to imagine a situation in which there would be an absolutely clean and efficient administration in the country — an administration which implemented the laws of the land without fear or favour, without considerations of high and low and without any regard to the personalities involved. It would be interesting to speculate as to how many politicians and their friends and relatives would not find themselves in deep trouble, if actually not behind bars under such an administration.

The truth of the matter is that our present political system is so heavily

dependent upon unearned money for its working that it just cannot afford to coexist with a really honest and efficient administration. On the other hand, it does require a dishonest, chaotic and inefficient administration to permit it to function with ease.

It is easy to see, in this context, why the I.C.S., which had been fashioned by the British as the elite service, as the service which for all purposes controlled all other services and therefore ran the entire administration, should have become the prime target of the politician from the very beginning. For, once this service with its proud traditions of efficiency and integrity had been laid low, there would be no fear of resistance from any other quarter. This service was also feared because it had the most intimate contact with the politician at all levels from the District upwards to the Central Secretariat and was therefore privy to all the secrets of his trade.

The subjugation of the I.C.S. did not prove to be as difficult as it seemed to be at first sight. While it was brutally brow-beaten by Kairon in the Punjab in the fifties, elsewhere more sophisticated methods were employed. The weaknesses of individual officers — who were after all also Indians, and no longer obliged to tread the straight and narrow path as they had to do under the British — were exploited to the full.

Such of them as were willing to play ball with their new masters — and their number was appreciable — were forgiven their sins and welcomed with open arms into the new triangular alliance which developed between politicians, senior officials and money power. Such officers were also allowed to partake generously of the hitherto forbidden pleasures of power and patronage and become completely identified with the interests of the ruling party. In the process, they gave up their true calling as public servants and became incapable of looking after the demands of good administration.

History will record that these worthies sold their souls for a mess

of pottage — in the shape of prestigious jobs while in service and liberal extensions, governorships and ambassadorships after superannuation. Instead of acting as a brake on the politicians, they actively collaborated with them and turned a blind eye to the intolerable administrative excesses which had begun to be committed as early as the middle fifties — for instance, in the Punjab under Kairon. Even today some men of this ilk, though long since retired, may be seen hanging around in the corridors of power in New Delhi, waiting for something to turn up which would again give them the trappings of office!

It was also discovered by the politician, fairly early on, that those comparatively few I.C.S. officers who did not jump on the bandwagon, could be handled without much difficulty. Such men — and they were the salt of the service — were easily taken care of by means of postings to rather innocuous jobs and shown no favours whether during service or after retirement.

The younger officers of the I.A.S. who witnessed these goings on drew their own conclusions. Surrounded by corruption, favouritism and nepotism, they became cynical before their time and began to follow the line of least resistance. Many decided to beat the 'successful' elders at their own game and attached themselves to powerful political God-fathers in the emerging mafia like situations.

Those who were not willing to compromise themselves were few and far between and felt they were not wanted by the system. They had necessarily to lie low in an atmosphere increasingly hostile to good administration, and soon ceased to count for anything. The politician had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams in reducing the good administrator to impotence while breeding the unscrupulous and ambitious type he wanted. It must be noticed that he was greatly assisted in this endeavour by the increasing economic distress to which officers were subjected as the result of the erosion in the value of the rupee, which is today worth

only about 25 paise in terms of the 1947 rupee.

In a country where good administration has necessarily to be treated like a hot-house plant if it is to survive at all, the victory of the politician was only to be expected. Looking back over the years, however, what is surprising is not that the services collapsed but that they took so long in doing so. For, the records show that even during the Emergency one could come across an odd officer who stood his ground, even though the whole administrative world lay crumbling around him.

The Emergency represented the high water mark of the politicians' victory in their long-drawn-out struggle against the services. The system of rewards and deterrents which had proved so successful in the past was now practised more openly and brazenly than ever before. The complete prostration of the services was reflected by the ease with which they were made to carry out orders which they knew to be illegal, even when these were conveyed verbally by low level functionaries who had no business to do so.

It is this prostration which the Shah Commission Report has bemoaned while expressing the hope that 'if the administrative machinery of our country is to be rendered safe for our children, the services must give a better account of themselves by standing up for the basic values of an honest and efficient administration'.

What exactly are the prospects of Justice Shah's hopes being fulfilled? These are not at all bright if one looks at the continuing clash between the interests which short-sighted politicians — of statesmen there are hardly any around — consider supreme and those which demand the restoration of a dynamic, efficient and incorruptible administration. The politician still continues to be deeply distrustful of the administrative services and seems to lose no opportunity of decrying them. The better elements in the services, demoralised and sullen as never before, still feel that

they are considered to be a nuisance by the powers that be.

In the ultimate analysis, we will get good administration only if, and when there is a strong enough demand for this commodity. While it cannot be denied that there is a latent demand for good administration on the part of the vast majority of the people, this has yet to find proper expression through the political processes of the country. It is difficult to say when and how this will come about. Much will depend upon the pressures which an increasingly politically-conscious electorate can succeed in exerting on the representatives of the people, in the States as well as at the Centre, and on the interest which a vigilant press takes in the subject, in order to create a climate of public opinion which political parties can ignore only at their peril.

In the meantime, a great responsibility rests on the services themselves. Let them not forget that if they have an execrable public image today, this is due as much to their own unscrupulous, callous, slothful, selfish and overambitious ways in the past as to any external circumstances. Let them not forget that their ultimate paymaster is not the politician whom they happen to be serving under at the moment, nor the vulgarly rich businessman who lurks in the shadows, but the bent, dried-up old stick of a man who represents the poor of this country.

If the services are to be true to their calling and to their salt, they must never waver in their loyalty to the man on whose backs they — and for that matter all the other privileged classes of the country — literally ride. Let them resolve to serve their real master under all circumstances, however adverse these might be, and to the very limit of their capacity. And let them approach this task not in a spirit of haughtiness or patronage but of genuine humility. Let them also not forget that if they do not prove their utility to the community even at this late stage they will be swept away into the dust-bin of history along with a great deal of other rubbish at no distant future.

The seven steps

V. SUBRAMANIAN

THE history of Indian administration since Independence gives many students of public affairs an uneasy feeling that administrators, by and large, are wooden headed and apathetic, that compassion and commitment are the exception rather than the rule, that it is only under discipline and control that bureaucracy behaves and, above all, that effective results are obtained only when administration is acting on a campaign basis or on a war-footing. In other words, administration in normal times can be the despair of the politician, the nightmare of social reformers, the last refuge of the people and the merciless preserver of an indefensible status quo.

And yet we cannot do without administrators, because they are the vehicles of development, of the enforcement of law, of the preservation of order. Questions that, therefore, need to be asked and answered are, what is the cause of the present malaise, who are responsible for the current discontents, what is the transformation required and how is it to be brought about?

Vox Populi which was suppressed during India's modern Dark Ages (June 1975—March 1977) asserted to herald the re-emergence of freedom. The millenium was around the

corner, Gandhi had been re-installed in the sanctum sanctorum of politics, morality and the common good was to be the spring of all action and man would again be at the centre. But, alas, the hue of the reality is very different. The same lethargy and unconcern prevails in the telephones, the post office, the railway counter, the fair price shop, the public sector monopoly concerns and also in the private sector which now follows a new manual in which the consumer is not the king. Nay, the second freedom has emboldened the public and private administrator and he is now completely indifferent to the consequences of his actions and behaviour. He has been freed from the fear of God, his fellowmen and even Caesar.

British rule was a convenient alibi till Independence and for some time after it. We have abjured some of the fine features of our erstwhile foreign rulers, i.e., their sense of dedication, their passion for justice and fair play, their commitment by their conscience. We have preserved some of the ugly heritages and as a consequence our administration has been enveloped by a gripping torpor of tradition, by a meandering maze of outworn procedures, by inquisitorial audit which questions effectiveness and

stultifies initiative, by a blind hugging of centralisation and a deep seated aversion to delegation of authority and, above all, by a hypocritical adherence to double standards. Instances in support of each one of the above can be quoted in legion. Every administrator is painfully aware of these features of administration when he wears — as he has to do some time or the other — the mantle of the 'administered'.

The diagnosis of the malady is a comparatively easy affair, the main components of the disease are now known; what is not so easy is to prescribe a remedy which, if not fool-proof, is at least, successful in partially curing the disease and capable of giving support to the sustenance of the system.

The prescription of a remedy is fraught with the uncertainty of its acceptance not so much because of any doubt about its efficacy, but because of a basic lack of discipline in most of us to abide by constraints on our activities and conduct imposed in the larger interests of the community. We have seen that the politicians are, with very rare exceptions, allergic to discipline even within their own group and party. What, then, with regard to discipline which governs the relations between them and the outside world. Nevertheless, there is no short cut to our constantly persuading the politicians to a different course of conduct than what they are accustomed to. 'Persuasion', as Romesh Thapar has said, 'is a slow business, but we have to intensify it, speed it, make it real'.* With the exception of the corrupt administrator and the administrator who does what he thinks or knows to be wrong and then attempts to obliterate his responsibility by saying that he had his pangs of conscience without having the courage to take the matter to its logical conclusion, the bureaucracy by and large is disciplined and will play according to the rules of the game.

I would suggest seven steps for the reform or reorientation of

administration and the public administrator — a Saptapadi (सप्तपदी) as it were for the consecration of the union between the interests of the public administrator, the politician, the people

The first step is a radical restructuring of our objectives and according a total priority to the provision of man's primeval requirements, namely, food, shelter and clothing. We have millions of tons of food rotting in rodent infested godowns or unprotected runways of outlandish airports and yet poverty in the form of hunger and starvation stalks the land. Our slums in the metropolitan and other cities are hell-holes of stink, dirt and corruption where human beings manage to survive at less than sub-human levels. Nor is the rural picture idyllic except to the eyes of the poet who writes his piece over a drink in a five star hotel. Even after the martyrdom of Churchill's 'Naked Fakir', thousands of our countrymen are ill clad. Each winter takes a heavy toll of many wretched and helpless souls.

On the basis of the minimum nutritional standards, the production of the required foodgrains should be the prime concern of the administrator. Along with it, of course, are problems connected with storage and distribution which should engage the meticulous attention of the administrator. Similarly, the construction of houses, according to minimum acceptable standards in the urban and rural areas should also be the second priority item on the agenda. In this connection, the administrative problem posed by the selection and development of cheap local raw-materials, research and development of cheap construction designs and the provision of local employment by a massive programme of house construction, would be more than adequate to engage the attention of the politician and the administrator. While the position with regard to clothing is comparatively easy, problems of research into the production of cheap cloth of standard varieties suitable for the large mass of the population, in co-ordination between the various sectors of the textile industry, i.e., mills, handloom, powerloom, arti-

ficial fibres, synthetic yarn, woollen, etc., are more than a mouthful

If the administrator and the politician engage themselves in the task of organization and implementation of the various priority programmes for the provision of the requirements of food, clothing and shelter of the community at large, not only will we be nearer the socialist goal, but we would be creating conditions of contentment which would usher in a participative democracy 'carefully decentralised, insulated fully from the distorting influences of private capital and the rentier class' *

The second step consists in gearing the administration to the provision of employment to the vast mass of the rural and the urban unemployed population so as to remove them from the curse of poverty. The administrative responsibilities implicit in the implementation of any such programme are so colossal as to present a real challenge both to the political worker and the administrator. In designing programmes for employment, the sincerity and capacity of the politician and the administrator will be severely tried because normally the tendency is to prefer prestigious schemes like steel plants, large cement factories, transmission towers, petro-chemical complexes and the like where employment content is marginal and which have also an inbuilt capacity to add to the problems of pollution, the decay of the environment and the generation of ecological imbalance.

The third step would be the complete overhauling of our educational, health and environmental services. The youth of our times want 'education which moulds the total personality of the individual through the disciplines of the work he enjoys and wins him recognition without discrimination. The young are no longer prepared to submit to the blackmail of educational systems rooted in a past that has passed, wasteful systems which consume vast resources in national budgeting'.**

*Ibid. Page 125

**Ibid. Page 108

! *The Waste and the Want — Thoughts on the Future. Romesh Thapar. Orient Longmans, 1978. Page 66

So too with the health and environmental services in which sphere there has been an over-emphasis of sophisticated programmes with expensive technology completely antithetic to the new socially humane organizations and systems we have to develop. The barefoot doctor, the multipurpose family welfare and health worker, the provision of cheap potable water which, inspite of all our advance and development, is still beyond the reach of millions of our countrymen—these are concepts and areas where the skill, the singleness of purpose, the tolerance and the organizational capacities of our administrators are going to be put to a severe test.

This agenda is modest, mundane, unglamorous, but over a perspective of a generation it can have an impact which can be profound and permanent. It is precisely because it appears to be pedestrian, patience-taxing and time-consuming, that the politicians and administrators seek to avoid it in preference to other programmes which are glamorous and resplendent in their outer shell.

The next four steps can be taken as one compact group. Delegation or more government at several levels including the lowest; training and orientation both for the politicians and the public administrators, insulation of politics from the aberrations of administration and of administration from the aberrations of politics, and the development of new attitudes in the administrators which will inspire them to take an aggressive and positive role rather than the traditional role of anonymity and neutrality.

Decentralisation and delegation of authority are shibboleths which are the stock in trade of management educationists and hypocritical bureaucrats and administrators who bandy about these expressions for the sake of creating an image without actually believing in them as a philosophy or a doctrine. Even Prime Ministers who swear by more and more government at lower levels have been exposed as non-believers who only show lip sympathy to these policies. I, for one, however, am, convinced that unless the

bureaucratic monolith is cut to size, unless State and Central Secretariats are reduced to effective compact and business like policy formulating cells and unless the district, the block and whenever possible, the Panchayat, are made the real centres of government-citizen activity, effective foci of administrative action, we shall not be able to break the shackles of authoritarianism which has reduced us to an ineffectual nation of puppets and eunuchs.

Mistakes will no doubt be made at the lower levels of decision making, but are not such mistakes made at the highest levels of authority? The higher echelons of politics and bureaucracy do not have the monopoly of wisdom or compassion. Even the British thought that the Indian sub-continent would have to be written off when they left. Events have proved how wrong they were. We need not wear the mantle of our erstwhile British masters.

Every person who desires to enter a profession needs an apprenticeship or period of training to equip himself for the activities of the profession. The only exception is the profession of administration! We are paying the penalty for this neglect. Both the politician and the bureaucrat need to be trained in the art of administration. An attitude of cynicism and contempt prevails in the mind of the politician and the administrator when questions of training are raised. Training is the last priority, if there is any priority at all. The senior echelons, particularly in the bureaucracy, are supercilious about their own participation in such activities and, when it comes to the question of sending others for practical training courses, the choice falls on the dispensable personnel whose absence will make the heart grow lighter! There must be a sea change in this attitude.

Bureaucracy is never tired of blaming all the evils of our administration on the politicians and their gnawing, sometimes deathly, interference in their own parochial interests. On the other hand, the politicians invariably lay the blame

for the failures of the administration on the woodenness, the inefficiency and the complete lack of commitment of the bureaucracy to the cause of the people's welfare. Both these views are exaggerated, possibly perverse descriptions of the reality. Let us get one matter straight. Politics cannot do without the support of bureaucracy nor can bureaucracy do without the guidance and the pulse of politics.

However, what is castrating to administration are the aberrations of politics and bureaucracy. It is not impossible, nay, it is necessary for politics to be free from the aberrations of bureaucracy and for bureaucracy from the aberrations of politics. The insulation of each from the more than endurable or permissible eccentricities of the other is a must. This can come about by a recognition of each other's rights, responsibilities and competence. A good and strong party system in a democratic framework could discipline its partymen in this direction for the purpose of achieving effectiveness. A good civil service system would be able to inculcate in its members the discipline, knowledge and a recognition of its own limitations as well as the benign role of politics in making administration responsive to the people's demands and welfare.

Finally, I would plead strongly for our bureaucracy liberating itself from the coils of some archaic concepts like anonymity, neutrality, detachment, etc., which, because of our blind adherence to them, have emasculated our administration and have made it a helpless witness to the perpetuation of atrocities, to the diversion of policies for personal benefit, the exploitation of the underprivileged by the stronger and avaricious sections of the community. I do not think there is any place for neutrality in administration.

On the other hand, the higher echelons of the bureaucracy must, in the light of their superior knowledge and expertise, explain policies pursued by the administration to the people and obtain their positive support and confidence. This does not amount to politicking. Nor

should the politicians be averse to this because the implementation of programmes and the execution of policies can be considerably facilitated by taking the people who are the potential beneficiaries into confidence, rather than leave them in ignorance or run the risk of their coming to conclusions which are not warranted

A faceless and nameless bureaucracy may have been the ideal in British administration because our foreign rulers may have had their nervousness in allowing Indians to deal with fellow Indians. This is no longer applicable. The politicians and the administrators are today partners in the service of the people. *Vox Populi* can become *Vox Dei* only if the people understand clearly the implications of governmental policy and how policies fulfil objectives which are projected when the politicians go to the people for votes.

The people's understanding on the other hand can be developed only by the objective but forceful explanation of the policies proposed to be pursued by the government. Democracy is not a one way traffic. A participative society requires for its flowering a bond between the people and the rulers. This bond will enable us to take 'solid steps towards decentralising the centralised States' function of controller, regulator, patronizer and influencer so as to increase the participative role of the citizens in moulding the policies which will envelop life and living. It is very necessary that we view the future in these terms if we are to arrive at any coherent view of the democratization of a political system and a way of life'.*

What I have attempted above is not a mere theoretical framework to be embedded in any text book on administration. It is and can be a practical agenda for action. But this demands patience and understanding on the part of the politicians on the one hand, and commitment and dedication on the part of the bureaucracy on the other. There is still hope that both the politician and the administrator will pass this acid test.

**Ibid* Page 113

The man in the middle

ANIL BHATT

THE district has a remarkable continuity as a basic unit of administration. Though attempts have been made to trace the origin of the district to ancient India, district administration as it has evolved in modern times has been the contribution of the British.

In the beginning, the district administration was confined to the maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue. Gradually the district came to be the basic unit of all governmental activities at the levels below the province. The government completely depended on the district administrator — the collector — for all its field administration and he became a legendary figure described as the ears, eyes and arms of the government. While he was feared, he was also respected and trusted. A lot of awe and authority was attached to the office of the collector and it was the dream of every officer to become a district administrator.

After independence, district administration began to acquire more and more importance and, in spite of the attempts to develop units below the district, at block and village levels, the district has remained the most important unit of field administration.

While continuing to be a basic unit for the central and State governments in terms of departmental organization, the district under various panchayati raj schemes stands at the apex of rural government as a directing, supervising and coordinating authority and, in some States like Gujarat and Maharashtra, as the most powerful executive body.

In matters of economic planning and development, it is the district which is the most significant level.

In matters of politics, again, the district occupies a salient position. Most political parties do not have any organization below the district. In the undivided Congress, while it had reasonably well organized taluka and mandal committees, it was the district Congress Committee which was its most active and effective unit

After independence, due to community development, panchayati raj and other developmental schemes, the manpower and resources of the district administration have increased enormously. For instance, in Gujarat the average budget of the ex-district local boards in 1953 was Rs 118,000, by 1973 the annual budgets of the district panchayats ranged from a minimum of Rs 2.5 million to a maximum of Rs. 60 million. In 1974, a district panchayat in Gujarat had 444 functionaries at the district level only the total panchayat administration at the district, talukas and villages employed 6,942 functionaries.

Many district level branches of the regular State government departments have now increased resources, personnel and functions. Moreover, many central and State level schemes of development are implemented through existing district bodies. The district administration has become so important that many of the political elite prefer to occupy some important position in panchayati raj institutions rather than become a simple MLA at the State level.

After independence and particularly since the later fifties, the district administration has witnessed two important developments (1) the rise in the number and power of developmental and technical administrators and (2) the rise in the number and power of the rural political elite

The collector has no more remained as 'the' district administrator. In some States, a new, formally almost equal and really much more important district officer has emerged.

Designated in Maharashtra as the chief executive officer, he heads the administration of panchayati raj bodies. Since he controls more resources and has programmes that distribute benefits, the political elite are much more interested in him than the collector. There has been an unprecedented rise in the number of technocrats — health, engineering, agriculture, veterinary, cooperation, education — who are working in the developmental sector. While the collector remains a de facto head of the district as he has been invested with emergency powers, he has lost the power and the glamour he used to possess. Today, very few government officers are attracted by the prospects of having to be a collector.

With the introduction of democracy in local government bodies, and decentralization of powers, functions and resources, the number of political functionaries has also increased enormously. There is the rural elite formally associated with the governmental bodies — the village, taluka and district panchayat members. The MLAs and MPs belonging to the district also continuously make demands on the district administrators. There are partymen not formally associated with government but who keep on rushing to the government offices. Then there are the so-called social workers who, though they may claim to be non-partisan, have their political linkages and wield considerable influence on the district administration. Finally, all important political leaders have their supporters and middle-men who constantly and vigorously make demands on the district administration for getting a bigger and bigger share of the governmental spoils. The district administrator cannot afford to ignore any of them.

Immediately after independence, it was felt that the administrators would create problems both for democracy and development.

With their education, experience and administrative skills, it was felt that they would overpower the democratically elected local politicians, many of whom were barely

literate and who had little, if any, experience of running the organizations. The administrators would create lot of impediments in the way of the democratically elected rural leaders to whom they would be naturally hostile.

Secondly, district administration based on the collectorate model and bred in colonial culture was considered singularly unsuitable for the tasks of development. The bureaucrats had the colonial mentality and were preoccupied with control and authority. They would not be willing, it was feared, to relinquish their well entrenched status and accept the new role of a public servant. As they belonged to the upper, elite strata of the society, they would not understand the problems of the poor, rural masses. They were elite, authoritarian and status oriented, they were not interested in bridging the gap between the elite and the masses.

The changed situation called for not only the participation of the people in governmental decision making, but involvement of the community in development programmes. The administrators were suffering from bureaucratism and were excessively rule and procedure oriented. What was needed in the new democratic, development situation was adaptability, flexibility, dynamism and democraticness.

Both the apprehensions have proved to be wrong. The local politicians have not only established their authority over the administrators but, in fact, have overwhelmed them. On the whole, in spite of the continuing old administrative structures, the administrators have adapted well. In fact, perhaps they have adapted too soon, too readily and too completely to the changed politicized environment.

However, in spite of the adaptation, his changed role as a democratic, development administrator, the complete politicization of the local level government and the continuing old dichotomy between the executive and deliberative functions have created severe problems for the district administrator.

Even at the district level and below, where politicians are statutorily associated with the administration, the sole responsibility for application of policies, programmes and rules lies with the administrators and they are held responsible for the flaws and the irregularities. And generally the administrators get blamed for the failures of plans and programmes. This dichotomy between policy and execution incorporated in the structural arrangement, and the new politicized environment, where power and influence is with politicians while responsibility rests with administrators, have created a number of serious problems in the working of the district government.

The administrative structure — the excessive emphasis on rules, the same hierarchical arrangements of supervision and control and such things — has still remained traditional and has not been geared to the demands of new developmental tasks. In terms of the purely administrative aspects — organization and methods — both in relation to his subordinates and superiors, the district administrator has to push against a solid wall. The work ways and attitudes of the State level administration has not changed. The district administrator is still neck deep involved in references and conferences, sanction and resanction, papers and procedures. He has constantly to attend to summons and circulars from the superior officers. And a lot of his time is spent in attending to the visitors, both administrative and political, from the State level.

However hard a district administrator may try, he finds it difficult to get along with the politicians. It is not a matter of the administrator's willingness or capacity to adjust or become flexible as it is so commonly believed in both the administrative and academic worlds. Most administrators are too willing to adjust, become flexible and even subservient. But this does not ease the situation as the situation has, as we shall see, become impossible.

The politicians make constant and continuous demands on them. These demands are of several types.

Firstly, there is a demand to get the largest share of governmental benefits so that the politician can extend his net of patronage. These include every conceivable thing from licenses and loans to permits and purchases. The administrator is constantly pestered to allocate unfair priorities and to approve irregularities. Even when the administrator is willing to submit, he has no escape because competition and rivalries are acute and he is likely to run into trouble with some political group or the other.

The second type of demands include pressures which are more directly political in nature. Here he is asked to do illegal things to help or harass a political group. These not only include going against clear government orders but also pressures to do undemocratic things such as dismissing the elected bodies controlled by rival groups, or forcing him to invalidate the resolutions of the elected bodies.

Even in minor matters like punishing or pardoning a village panchayat president for not depositing money in the treasury in the prescribed time limit, state-wide channels of communications and influence are activated. The district administrator is constantly approached at the time of elections to use his men and resources to help some politician or to harass his rivals. Even State level ministers who may not have anything to do with a particular district get into the fray.

Thirdly, the district administrator has also to be prepared for a possibility that he will be asked to indulge in corruption which is meant to benefit the politician personally. These include sanctioning the illegal use of government vehicles (it may be remembered that the use or misuse of the government vehicles is the administrator's responsibility as he has to maintain the log book. It may also be noted that in community development and panchayati raj administration, innumerable conflicts between politicians and administrators have arisen because of jeeps) to purchasing of materials for the offices which may be substandard in quality, high in price or just not needed.

The politician's 'cut' in government business is now becoming a regular feature even at lower levels. It is worth investigating as to how much of corruption for which the administration is accused is done at the instance and for the benefit of the political leaders or in partnership with them.

Then there is the problem of interpersonal relationships. That the politician is the boss is now a well recognized thing, and even the most diehard status-bound administrator, has come to accept it. But severe problems are created because the norms of interpersonal relationships are not observed by the politicians. The rural politicians particularly seem to be ignorant of these norms. They do like to make administrators continuously feel their power and status. They assume that the administrator's time is entirely at their disposal. They walk into the administrator's office at any time they like and demand immediate attention. They summon them at any unscheduled time and expect the administrators to be present.

Sometimes politicians scold officers in the presence of their constituents merely to show how strong and powerful they are. Shouting at officers, impolite and discourteous behaviour towards them and wanting subservient attention from them is not an uncommon feature. Although bureaucracy is most commonly blamed for its status conscious, hierarchical and *buda saab* behaviour, it is not recognized that the politicians have also very quickly imbibed the culture. Once in power, they do want to enjoy the status, the facilities and the flattery. While they may act as very humble men in their public appearances, their organizational behaviour is equally hierarchical, status oriented and bossy.

Whether it is a matter of giving a seat in the government vehicle or a room in the government guest house, the administrator is constantly on his toes lest he may say or do something which would hurt the ego of the political boss. Raw egoism, standing on prestige,

status and dignity are the things that the administrators have to constantly face in relation to their political bosses. The aspects of interpersonal relationship do not seem to be well recognized and noted but sometimes they assume enormous proportions which delay, distort and even destroy many development programmes.

The mobilizational aspects of the development programmes in rural areas become the sole burden of the administrators. While, on the one hand, the rural political elite gets involved into the minutiae of administration and wants to have a decisive say, on the other hand, some most difficult tasks of developmental programmes are left to be handled by administrators alone. Those aspects of development which require the education of the masses, reforming and changing their life style, overcoming their resistance to innovations and modernization — mobilization and participation of communities in development programmes become the responsibility of the administrators alone.

One of the primary justifications for associating the political elite with the local government was that the latter, being closer to the people socially and culturally, would be more effective in mobilizing mass support and community participation than the administrator who was supposed to be alien, highbrow and coming from a social strata highly removed from the rural masses. But the local political elite is not interested in popularising family planning or persuading people to accept inoculations. Development, except when benefits are to be distributed, is too mundane an affair for local leaders.

Another problem that senior district level officers may face is that their subordinate staff may not always be with them. The lower level staff is generally local. They have developed communal and political linkages and are well entrenched. Many of them have got in because of their connections with political leaders. They may often do things for their political leaders without the knowledge of, or sometimes even against, the wishes of

their superior officers. Most senior political leaders have their men at lower levels in administration. Thus, officers may be heading teams whose loyalties could be elsewhere.

The administrators, particularly at field levels, are continuously exhorted to become public oriented, to go to the masses and be close to the people. They are asked to be innovative and result oriented. But if they try this, then even this could get them into trouble. Enthusiastic, hard working and innovative administrators are not always liked by superiors or subordinates as they can make things uncomfortable for them. The young enthusiastic officer soon finds out, sometimes at great personal cost, that it is wise to walk on the beaten track. The politicians belonging to the opposition parties also dislike hard working and result getting officers lest they might make the ruling politicians more popular.

Political leaders also do not like officers who go out and mix among the masses and try to solve their problems by direct contacts because the politicians' interest is to make themselves indispensable to their constituents. They thus do not like their role as the 'go-between' the people and the administration being threatened.

The structural dichotomy between policy making and execution has encouraged the incidence of undue and unofficial pressures. Since the responsibility for the execution and implementation rests on the officers, politicians have learnt to put the pressure on at the time of implementation. In fact, on the whole this dichotomous situation suits them well. Because politicians are public men, they may be compelled to take certain egalitarian policy decisions or devise objective criteria for programmes and allocation of resources. They have to do this in order to maintain socialistic and democratic postures. But if at the time of implementation they can bring pressures to serve their personal or political purposes, then they would be very safe. In fact, this particular aspect of development administration creates maximum problems for

the administrator as it is he who will be held responsible.

The district level administrator finds that he is sandwiched in the middle of all this. If he resists the political pressures because they are against rules and policies or because he thinks that this would be doing injustice to those who do not have the resources to bring pressures, then conflicts arise. Once the conflicts arise it is he who gets all the blame — it is always the administrator who is not tactful, not adaptable, does not know how to get along well with politicians. Usually, in case of conflicts, his administrative superiors continue to send messages, without really finding out why tensions arose, 'be tactful; you should know how to handle politicians'. In the few cases when they do understand that the situation is beyond repair, they do not have either the courage or the capacity to support him.

If he gives in and succumbs to the demands of the politicians, then there are always the rival politicians to criticize and expose him. His behaviour and actions are closely watched. Even the slightest irregularity on his part can land him into trouble. There is no way he can put the blame on the politicians by saying that he was forced to do illegal things by them. He is the executive, maintaining the rule is his responsibility. It is also worth investigating how much of rigidity and adherence to rules and procedures for which administrators get criticized arises out of pressures to do things against the sanctioned policies and programmes and the administrators' constant anxiety that even a minor irregularity on his part might get him into trouble.

The district level leader has linkages with State level leaders and sometimes State level bureaucrats. Because of his higher level connections it is not easy for the district administrator to fight him or resist him. Even when people at the State level know that the district administrator was not at fault, nobody would like to displease the political leaders.

The political leaders can afford to be vocal. They can criticize the

administrator in council meetings, in press and public. But the administrator is not supposed to come out openly in public to defend himself. And even when the accusations are completely unjustified, the damage is done because all concerned begin to think that the administrator is in trouble.

Since district politicians cannot be transferred, it is the administrator who gets transferred. Political instability — changes of parties, political groups and leaders is a well recognized phenomenon. But administrative instability — frequent change of administrators for political reasons — is not that well noticed. There is hardly any senior level district officer, particularly in panchayati raj bodies, who has not come into conflict with politicians sooner or later, and who has been able to complete his three year term in one place.

To be sure, the administrators also play the game (though the rules of the game are stacked against them). They have their political patrons. In most States there are sub-regions. Administrators also affiliate themselves with the politicians on the basis of sub-regional loyalties. Caste-loyalties are also invoked, particularly by the administrators belonging to the low and middle level castes. Corrupt administrators strike bargains and 'unholy alliances' are also not rare. But political patronage is a weak support since political loyalties are so fluid and political instability has become so common.

Administrators also go out of their way to keep politicians pleased because they are ambitious, or want a posting or position in a particular place

Many administrators have also understood that in a highly populist environment it is important to do spectacular, popular things. District level administrators even pay considerable attention to press, publicity and public relations rather than attending to slow and unspectacular tasks of public administration. There have been instances, though few, when administrators have mobilized public opinion in

their favour and against some politicians.

Most administrators have also learnt to employ certain 'tactics' which are now fashionably called 'strategies' in administrative circles. They try to stall and delay, refer the matter upwards, misinform the pestering politicians, spread rumours, use other officers and subordinates as scapegoats and sometimes lie outright. Occasionally, this way they are able to ward off the pressures for a while, fool some politicians or sneak in something against the wishes of the powerful leaders and feel triumphant. But most of these tricks do not work beyond a point and do not accomplish anything substantial.

Tactfulness, pragmatism or flexibility in concrete terms may often mean fulfilling unreasonable demands, doing irregular and often unjust things, making unfair allocation of resources and arriving at pseudo-compromises. This does not permit the system to make a breakthrough either in terms of democracy or development.

The good and honest administrator (and this breed is in danger of extinction) who would not agree to anything that he thinks is unreasonable, unjust or irregular; who would uphold norms, values and standards, who would take initiative, who would take his job as a mission and would seriously want to bring about development, would get into trouble very soon. Given the reality, he may be considered a misfit. He is likely to exasperate everybody—his subordinates, colleagues, the political elite with whom he has to work and his superiors at the State level.

The primary responsibility for the failure of the rural development plans has to rest on the shoulders of political leaders. No doubt there are structural flaws in the administrative system. But a great lot of problems are generated by the political processes and not primarily because the administrative system is weak. As mentioned earlier, district level political leaders have proved to be very powerful and decisive. If, therefore, they are

really committed to development, much can be achieved. There have been instances, though few, where strong and dedicated district level leaders have been able to achieve a great deal for the development of their district.

The formal administrative reforms would not achieve much. In improving the administration at all levels, including the district level, the focus has been entirely on administrative reforms. But structural reforms like introducing ombudsmen or reducing or enhancing the powers and resources at the district level, would accomplish very little if introduced in a political environment which has degenerated. The Administrative Reforms Commission's report on district administration, one of the best documents produced by any government, has made very little impact.

The recent emphasis on strengthening the rural sector and the concomitant flow of resources and power towards the district level will above all have to take into consideration the political environment—because it will be politics and not merely administration which will ultimately determine whether the new rural development formula will achieve any decisive break through.

The realists, of course, would argue that one cannot expect politicians to disregard their personal and political gains and not to use their power and positions to enhance their political career. But even from a purely pragmatic perspective, it has to be a matter of degree. Is there going to be a limit? Are the lines going to be drawn somewhere? When development is to be achieved through the democratic framework, traditions, norms and values are very salient. Those who have strong hopes in the market mechanism processes of democratic politics (compulsions of competitive politics will bring about a balance and an ultimate break-through) too often tend to forget that the fundamental assumption behind associating political representatives with public institutions is that they would be interested in the public and not only in themselves.

Aa a woman

SHASHI MISRA

THE advent of women in the occupational field is not a new development. Even if we leave aside the case of matriarchal societies where women invariably played the 'masculine' role, we find that in most of our patriarchal set-ups women were never really excluded from the economic field. Almost upto the agricultural and industrial revolution, there was hardly any field of economic activity in which women did not participate along with their menfolk the world over. The following advice given in 'A Present to a Servant Girl' in 1743 may well be taken as representative of the attitude prevalent particularly in the middle and lower strata of society:

You cannot expect to marry in such a manner as neither of you shall have occasion to work; and none but a fool will take a wife

whose bread must be earned solely by his labour and who will contribute nothing towards it herself.

Nearer home, despite the anti-feminism which began with the rise of asceticism and Buddhism, and culminated in the *Manusmriti*, our annals teem with instances of women who participated in agriculture, trade and administration. It was only after industrial advancement revolutionised the methods of production and brought into vogue highly developed techniques, that women were effectively excluded from the economic field. Even then, women in the lower classes continued to share the economic burden of their families. In India, the situation was salvaged by the independence movement which brought out into the open, and on par with men, women of all classes, with the higher class in the lead. Since then, the country has witnessed increasing participation by women in the top echelons of admini-

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nistrative, public and professional life

And rightly so, for notwithstanding the unemployment in the country it is now widely acknowledged that women have their own individual contribution to make in the realm of development and the country should not be deprived of the services of this major segment of its functional population. Women also have a right to develop their personalities by participating in the economic and public life of the country and they cannot rightly be deprived of it. To quote Myrdle and Klein

Something must be wrong in a social organisation in which men may die a premature death from coronary thrombosis, as a result of over-work and worry, while their wives and widows organize themselves to protest against their own lack of opportunities to work.

Most important of all is the economic argument. It is high time that we confronted this reality squarely in the face that most women today do not have a choice. They have to work to make both ends meet. It is in this context that the return of the prodigal to the occupational field is welcome.

In the present paper, I propose to deal mainly with the problems encountered by a women entrant to the Indian Administrative Service. She is perhaps conscious of carrying forward a process which some of our estimable women began when they stepped into public life during the struggle for Independence. In contrast to her western counterpart, who might instinctively flinch at being termed a 'career girl', the Indian girl begins such a career often with a sense of pride, strength, independence and enthusiasm. She may be conscious of being progressive and, unconsciously perhaps, she draws support from the historical backdrop mentioned earlier.

Apart from this, she also has the realisation that the languid concept

of delicate femininity sweetly domesticated, is not at all relevant today. Lily-white hands have given way to work accustomed spatulate ones. More and more girls are beginning to take in their youthful stride this extra responsibility which has devolved on them due to the increased cost of living.

Most of the women who enter administration today were born and spent their childhood at a time when, in the higher and upper middle class families in India, it was not necessary for women to take up employment to supplement the family income. The idea of taking up a career in this field enters their minds at a later stage except in a few exceptional cases. As a result their awareness of the working of the occupational world is extremely hazy. They are also much fewer in number than the male entrants into the field. The female entrant is thus a lot more apprehensive than her male colleague, of what lies in store for her in this occupation which has traditionally been regarded as masculine. For instance, most girls might not have the foggiest idea of what a file is and may be confused no end by crisp terms like 'D.O. note' and 'memorandum'.

Added to this is the further discomfort of entering into a field of ready-made economic culture which, by its origin and peculiar character, is masculine. In the formation of the laws, principles, procedures and ideals of this set up, women have hardly had a share and so it does not cater to the demands of their special problems and characteristics. Being in the position of outsiders intruding into a finished system, the tendency for them to emulate the already well entrenched male members is perhaps a little too exaggerated. The entry of the modern woman in the field of administration is thus marked by mixed feelings. Her disadvantages she is aware of, but her advantages she has yet to discover.

Coming now to the details of administration, the problem is basically one of mutual adjustment. The woman officer has to be accepted by her superiors, subordinates and

the public in general. She, on her part, has to come to terms with her surroundings and improvise solutions to problems peculiar to officers of her sex. The first few years of an IAS officer are devoted to administration in the rural area where one enters with the funny feeling of being looked upon as a curiosity. After taking over charge, as the woman officer sits in her chair, the first thing that follows is an introductory discussion with the staff of her personal office. The subordinates seem to be shifty and not quite comfortable. They will not look her directly in the eye, and when they speak to her, they would be looking at some other person nearby. Some address her as 'Sir', while others feeling hesitant to use the unfamiliar 'Madam', do not address her at all.

In Maharashtra I found that they finally settle for the more familiar and convenient 'Bai Sahib'. Then follows a meeting with the field officers, who are Class II officers of the state civil service. It does their male ego no good to have a woman superior. As she enters the room, they are torn between the instinct to rise before an entering officer and their hesitation in getting up for a woman. Eventually, they compromise by a mere shuffling of the feet. Conversation is very stiff. They are not at all sure whether the lady before them should be informed of terse masculine things like the principal crops of the area, the prospects of harvest and the law and order situation. Granted that she is an officer, it is nevertheless difficult to overlook that she is first a woman. Many doubts assail them, will she understand, will she comprehend and, worst of all, is she really interested? Details of rural administration have to be coaxed out of them gently, persistently, dropping little hints here and there to indicate some working knowledge of the problems at hand. Then grudgingly, reluctantly at first, and with greater ease and confidence as time passes, information starts coming forth and communication begins.

Touring in the rural areas poses problems for women officers which their male colleagues may not en-

counter. To wit, there is the guard of honour! Like the other trainees, I too had been on tour with the District Collector before going off on tour alone. And from what I had seen, I felt most uncomfortable about facing the guard of honour. It is all very well for a man, however unsmart and sloppy he may be, to go and stand on his two-trouser legs and take the salute. But I was saddled with a sari. The more I thought of my sari fluttering in the air, or worse still, slipping off the shoulder, the more uneasy I felt. Fortunately for me, I found just in the nick of time that a predecessor of mine had followed the practice of merely standing at attention during the whole ritual and I mercifully followed suit.

Any officer who visits a village is followed by a virtual procession of subordinate officers, local leaders, other villagers who are not occupied with any work at that time, children and stray dogs. A woman officer leading such a procession gets used to the sudden expression of astonishment which springs into the eyes of the bystanders as the procession comes closer to them and they can discern that it is a woman in the lead. When they all finally settle down in the Chawdi (Talathi's office) or temple, the assessment of the officer begins in earnest.

The local leader plays a prominent role and he is one of the shrewdest judges of officer-like qualities. In all fairness to him it must be said that the moment one problem of the village is taken up by the woman officer and properly appreciated, or even convincingly rejected, further communication is spontaneous and warm. Word then quickly spreads round from one area to another and the woman officer can congratulate herself on having 'arrived'. The first to accept her as an officer are the subordinates, then the villagers and local leaders, then her superior officer (considerations of gallantry apart, his responsibility is to get the work done) and then the political leaders at the district level.

Once the ball is thus set rolling, it is found that the woman officer

can do as good a job as her male colleague in all fields of administration, right from dealing with scarcity, floods and re-settlement operations, controlling violent mobs, conducting elections, auctions and semi-judicial proceedings to probing into the problems of the tribal people, dealing with the exigencies of municipal administration and formulating policy in various fields of administration. She might well find a comforting likeness in Beatrice Webb's description of Miss Cons, a social worker in the East End slums: 'To her people she spoke with that peculiar combination of sympathy and authority which characterised the modern type of governing women.' As distinctive characteristics of this new type of women, Beatrice Webb stresses their 'eyes clear of self-consciousness' and their 'dignity of habitual authority.'

Some advantages peculiar to women administrators can now be reckoned. Once the authority and efficiency of a woman officer is accepted, the pendulum often swings to the other extreme and even her ordinary administrative acts are given a halo. It may not be very flattering to her feminine ego to hear people say that she can do all this work 'despite being a woman', but that psychology certainly helps her administratively. The rural folk sometimes view with feelings amounting to awe, a woman officer estimating crops or conducting a magisterial enquiry into a firing, or even going on an ordinary tour in a government jeep as it tumbles over hill and dale on rough metal roads. Her relations with political leaders also tend to be harmonious as roughness is largely eschewed.

Another obvious advantage for a woman officer is that women, particularly in the rural areas, pick up courage freely to discuss their problems with her. On my tours, the women of the village invariably used to come in a group separately to meet me. They were thrilled no end to find a woman officer and would freely raise problems of medical aid, schools for children or even repair of steps leading to the village pond. On my part, I found this advantageous in various ways.

During the scarcity of 1972-74 when some villages actually suffered from acute water shortages, some others merely shouted aloud in order to get some benefits. I could find out from the local women where they really fetched their water from, and whether there was enough of it or not.

During one of my tours, I embarrassed the villagers by asking one of them, a young man who had three children, why he had not got himself vasectomised. This was followed by much sniggering and hiding of heads between the knees I left it at that but later I learnt that the incident was reported to his wife, who found this a good opening. For, if a woman who is an outsider could broach the subject with him, she who was his wife certainly could! I was told that she ultimately nagged him into undergoing the operation.

The feminine touch also helps in internal administration and personnel management. All headquarters offices have a large percentage of women employees. Ensuring discipline among them is a tricky business involving chronic problems like absenteeism, truancy, etc. A woman officer would find it simpler to pull them up, hound them out of their favourite nooks, tea corners and even toilets where they have a knack of disappearing and bind them down to work without making an undue fuss about their being the so-called weaker sex. Their tears do not work on her either. As for men, they are kept on their toes and deliver the goods promptly for fear of being scolded in front of everybody by a woman.

Another trait which might prove to the advantage of a woman officer is what Havelock Ellis calls 'suggestibility'. He observes that 'whereas men possess greater aptitude in dealing with the remote and abstract interests of life, women have, at the least, as great an aptitude in dealing with the immediate practical interests of life'. The suggestibility, according to him, makes them specialists par excellence in the method of successfully muddling through, and in the ultimate analysis it is the results that matter, whatever the

method. To quote a cunning quip, 'an efficiency expert does what, if women were to do it, would be called nagging!'

On the minus side, apart from the disadvantages mentioned earlier, a woman officer suffers from drawbacks like absenteeism, restricted mobility, etc., which, since they are not psychological in nature, do not fall within the purview of this paper. Taking up the psychological aspect only, a woman administrator's limitations arise mainly on account of her parallel, and at times conflicting role as wife, housekeeper and mother. Personally I think that the roles of officer and wife are not irreconcilable. On the contrary, the two can be teamed beautifully together and a working couple might find a wider range of common interests and a greater sense of companionship in the bargain. Likewise, reconciling an office-going routine with housekeeping responsibilities can easily be managed with a little organisation of one's daily work.

It is only the last mentioned role, viz., that of a mother, which can be identified as a real area of conflict. The first necessity in this context is the physical presence of a reliable person at home to take care of the child or children while the mother is away at work. This is becoming exceedingly difficult due to the disintegration of the joint family on the one hand and the dwindling availability of reliable domestic help on the other. If the physical presence of a substitute for the mother at home can be assured, it would mean half the battle won.

The woman officer herself has to take the responsibility for solving the other half of the problem, viz., giving the children necessary companionship and creating an atmosphere conducive to proper development. Working women often carry a feeling of guilt towards their children due to the daily separation they have to observe perforce. To a certain extent, modern socio-psychological studies have come to her rescue to establish the view that the amount of time that the mother spends with the children is immaterial as compared to the way in which that time is spent. To quote Myrdle and Klein

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the all-important factor is the attitude and personality of the mother rather than the amount of time she spends with her children. The neurotic, neglectful or foolish mother is a menace to her children, probably no less if she devotes all her time to them than if she does not. On the other hand, the intelligent, sympathetic, loving mother may be able to give her child a sense of emotional security which is not disturbed by her regular or even her irregular absences'.²

Indeed the term 'working' mother is exceedingly misleading in the sense that a mother who is at home is not 'idle'. She has lots to do and it is just as well that the child does not have to tag along after a person who is busy cooking, dusting, cleaning and tidying, so that the interests of the child do not get cramped within the area of the mother's work. Left to themselves, children can take interest in things on more individual lines. This is not to make a sweeping generalisation, but the possibility is too strong to be ignored. In the children's interest, it cannot be over-stressed that mothers have other aims in life as well, so that both of them have access to wider horizons, neither of them lean too heavily on each other, and as the child grows into an adult and the mother reaches middle or old age, neither makes unjustified demands on the time and affections of the other and are capable of leading a normal self-dependent life, the need for which cannot be over-emphasised in the world of today.

Notwithstanding this theoretical position, a woman officer is often not sufficiently reassured. The fact remains that the claim of official duty and that of the children often pull in opposite directions and a woman officer finds herself on the horns of a dilemma. It is on such occasions that she has to lay down clear-cut priorities. If she is prepared to place official duties uppermost the chances are that she may develop some sort of a guilt complex

towards the children, justifiable or otherwise, and consequently an unconscious antagonism towards the demands of official duty. If she is a more conscientious mother, she might possibly be a less reliable officer. Either way it is a drawback for her; and this psychological dilemma is a constant drag on her energies, physical as well as mental. This is her fundamental limitation as a woman officer.

Perhaps, with the passage of time, when the number of women officers is sufficiently large to enable us to come to some kind of a general conclusion on the psychological advantages that children derive out of a working mother, the truth of the positive trend of thought mentioned earlier would be clearly established. Also, by that time, women officers, a majority of whom are young today and can only see the apparent disadvantages of their absence away from their children, might realise the advantages of their having been career women. When they see these children mature into self-dependent and mentally alert human beings. If such positive results are seen on a large scale, women officers may develop confidence in the beneficial results of their own careers on their children and they may then shed their feeling of guilt and devote themselves to their work with greater ease and sincerity.

It would help a great deal if social scientists and psychologists surveyed this area of human activity in greater detail, so that the advantages of children having working mothers could be soundly established and the disadvantages scientifically hounded out. The necessity of this kind of a reassurance cannot be overemphasised because more and more women are being compelled by economic necessity to take up employment. One can only hope that the above mentioned optimistic conjecture would be borne out by scientific investigation, so that the woman officer of the future can have a more comfortable mental make-up. Till then her present day counter-part is a little unsure, and while doing her bit, she hopes for the best as far as the future of her career and her family are concerned. She is keeping her fingers crossed.

Rot at the grass-roots

K. F. RUSTAMJI

'No society is stagnant, no society stands still and no society can suffer an outrage on decency. Therefore, unless the legal system adapts itself to the changing needs of the people, even the most inveterate faith of law will not assure its viability in the challenging conditions of our age. For achieving this ideal, ad-hoc therapies for isolating trouble-spots are wholly inadequate. What is necessary is to identify key points for adjustment between the framing and implementation of laws on one hand and the aspirations of society on the other. Students of law are familiar with Dicey's notorious formulation that the legislature lags a generation behind public opinion and courts another generation behind the legislature.'

Y. V. Chandrachud—Chief Justice of India.

'I DISLIKE a policeman on sight.' We had already got into the rail car in Kalka, and I had mentioned to a young man who was the only other passenger, that I was on tour with the Police Commission. I wondered what had happened. Was he referring to the Sub-Inspector

we had passed on the platform — a Punjabi wrestler gone to fat—a solid human globe, with a belt which looked as if the Equator had fallen into Antarctica, and both ends had been made to meet under considerable strain.

The young man looked intelligent, a student perhaps, shirt open all the way down, a medallion showing a karate symbol, jeans with rivets and badges.

'I have been a policeman myself, and I am still interested in them,' I said.

'No. No. No. No.' He said, 'You are joking. I mean that man', and he pointed to a weary, peevish-looking constable on the platform.

'But why be against him? What has he done?'

'Because', he said hesitatingly, 'he stands for authority — and we dislike that — his kind stand between us and a quick change, and they kill those of us who want a change.' The rail car was preparing to leave. A middle-aged Punjabi couple — the woman attractive, the man well-built — after endless teas and

toasts sat down together on the front seat, the driver being separated by a partition; thank God. As soon as the car started, the couple began the most effusive and demonstrative love making. It was not a teenage crush. Both of them were much beyond that age. It could have been an elopement — some warm September affair or a return from the Gulf or London, with pounds in the pocket, and the hope of a family reunion in Simla.

Pramode, the student, and I could hardly help intruding. Whenever we looked at each other we smiled, and I wondered whether another's infectious happiness could be the basis of one's own.

The rail car to Simla at the right season is probably the most perfect way of making a journey in India. The little car chugs up the mountain, making you feel as if you were walking on air through hills and forests, the mountains covered with various shades of velvet green, pine and fir dripping rain.

I felt the opportunity for some insight into the mind of a student was too good to be missed.

'Do you want a change by murdering people? The courts may take note.'

'No! No! No! Who would give evidence?'

'You will finish them?' I asked.

He looked at me with some contempt, a little anger, some doubt. 'We may not be able to change without violence', he said thoughtfully.

Then his eyes fell on the couple on the front seat, now engaged in an eye-ball to eye-ball conversation, and something about them seemed to sadden him.

'Yes. We will change, but in the wrong way. Money for a few'

'Like you,' I said, provocatively.

'And jobs for very few, like you, to murder us.'

We turned away from each other. He sat swollen at one end of the

seat. Some uncertainty seemed to rack him.

And yet suddenly he was fast asleep. I was reminded of my third class days when a sadhu or patriot made a small niche of a bed in the piles of luggage on the top seat, and calmly slept the night while down below we stepped on each other's toes.

I looked out — at the distant good. My mind wandered to meetings of the Commission with scores of people in Haryana and Punjab. We had covered almost half the country and with each visit my view of the police seemed to get more and more troubled, and yet the direction of police reform was now becoming clearer. The fact was also clear that it was not the police alone that needed reform. Our whole system of justice was in need of an overhaul.

Law and Justice

What a mess we have made of law and justice since independence I thought to myself. And what dangers that can hold to our basic guarantees of life and liberty. Trials without end — undertrials for years in jails facing hardships of an unimaginable nature — congestion in courts which is now estimated in years (not light years yet), withdrawal of cases for any and every reason, incompetent and unreliable investigations, bail to the rich, interference with the enforcement of the law at every stage.

Even our pattern of trade and economic dependence on each other seems to be changing because we just cannot get a decision in a civil court. Can you get anything on credit? Will anyone trust you with rent or a loan? All transactions have to be in cash, even massive ones, which open up the floodgates of black money.

And where is this leading us to? Dadagiri in debt collection — dacoits deciding field boundaries and village disputes — vendetta without end. Corruption unlimited. If the State is unable to assure justice, in the end we will have summary trials; followed by rifle fire at dawn.

The Law of Change

How did all this begin? I asked the purple hills. I know that self-seekers among us have ruined the integrity of the police. There is no dearth of small men in big places, with more ambition than integrity. But what else?

A booming voice seemed to come to me across the mountains. 'There is a law resounding across the centuries — the law of change. The police apparatus is fixed, unchangeable, immutable, completely out-of-date. The basis of your work is the Police Act of 1861, framed after the mutiny, and the Police Commission Report of 1903 now 75 years old, and the Indian Evidence Act enacted in 1872. India has changed from mutineering against foreign rule to angry debates in a democracy. But you have the same law (with a few changes which have made things worse), the same police, the same procedure, the same legal handicaps, even the same Police Regulations. Worst of all the same attitudes.'

Even our basic approaches in dealing with crime and criminals and disorder have not changed despite Independence. Police violence is encouraged by the highest in the land as soon as any difficult situation arises. An authoritarian attitude, we are told, is said to be the basis of policing in a poor country. And that seeps down to all ranks. Torture, beat, step on anyone. Rudeness pays. There is no effort at all to secure public trust and cooperation which is the true foundation of police work. A retired ICS officer had to ask for the support of three high-ranking people to get a copy of the First Information Report lodged by him, a document which he is entitled to by law.

We make fun of Dada Amin for saying that he will make one of his Colonels walk on someone's face — but if two or three murders occur together, or a robber gang breaks loose — perhaps on bail — everybody in the land seems to clamour for third degree. And the police grope about arresting droves, spending long nights in interrogation, beating up whoever they want to, and in the end a lone constable stumbles

upon the clue that breaks the case, and his superiors try to claim the credit for it.

When will our politicians, the media and even some of our senior civilians learn to apply the right standards to judging police work? Or will this ever be the object of political blackmail?

Would it not be worthwhile for experiments in participation by public citizens — if not in actual situations — in discussion and problem-setting? Will politics always be based on satyagraha on the right to create disorder, to create incidents? Is selective law enforcement to be tolerated for ever? One day we will find that the police structure has collapsed, eaten through and through by the weavels of politics, corruption and operational strain. Each day the IG offers a prayer, 'Not in my time, O' Lord'.

We took over a system in which the police was equated with and controlled by government — the Raj — and we continued the same method, with the result that in India the police has not even striven to be a servant of the law. And instead it has become an instrument in the hands of any politician who can threaten transfers and suspensions. In the ACR form of one State there is still a column 'loyalty to the government,' obviously the party in power.

The link-up that has appeared between politicians and policemen in many States has been accepted as part of our national life.

Jail that man
Bail that man
Harass that man
Make up a case against him of his son or his relatives even if it is a price tag case.

Send a constable to recover my rent, throw out the tenant, humiliate another or just call him to the police station and keep him waiting for several hours, and, of course, don't allow him use of the telephone to call a lawyer or a friend. The worst feature of all this is that the police are constantly interfering with political developments, a feature which can hold out grave threats to a democracy.

We are apt to forget that it is not money that is important, it is the social dominance that everyone tries to attain. Money then flows of its own accord.

The Minister hands down a list of 150 transfers — SPs, SHOs, even constables. (A Sub Inspector told us that he had been transferred 96 times in 28 years, one district has had seven SPs in a year. In Bihar the average tenure of an IG has been about one year in the last few years.) Now even the ostensible reason of reducing 'police manmani' is given for a transfer. He is 'our man' and he is needed to secure dominance in the Police Station jurisdiction.

The girl in the front seat of the rail car started a transistor — Vividh Bharati. Pramode woke up with a start '*Voh Pas Rahen Ya Dur Rahen Nazron Men Samaye Rahte Ham*'.

He had forgotten the row I blessed Vividh Bharati, as I have done all my life. I remember Maulana Azad once being very critical of 'Film Gane'. He called them 'Bazaru'. That old man, a great man, had never been young at any time in his life.

Pramode and I started talking again. He was in a jovial mood. It's amazing how much wit and wisdom the youth of today has.

The Triangle of Inequity

We began to talk about the involvement of politicians and police in a joint effort to rook the countryside. 'How does it operate?' Pramode asked me.

'The SHO and the politician with the goonda form a triangle of vice and inequity that can seldom be pierced by vigilance or anti-corruption or even by the media. All social evils come within the ambit of this pernicious triangle. Gambling, prostitution, supply of opium and charas, illicit distillation, and of course, economic offences. Controls of any sort are what they always want. In the last two years the biggest racket of all has been the cinema ticket racket.

'The duties are well divided. The goonda provides the muscle power to protect the offender from other gangs of the same type. The rival in the forbidden field would have his muscle men too. He is supported by the SHO, and the politician guides the whole ensemble with managerial skill combined with an eye for profits that is remarkably clear. Within a year the requirements of the next election are assured. Five years, and you can count the houses, the new shops, and the unbearable relatives that have appeared from nowhere to share the loot.'

'Good God! But I suppose this happens only in the cities.'

Rural Godfather

'You may imagine that this type of Godfather business can be built up only in big cities, particularly in those where gambling and liquor distillation have taken deep roots. But any rural area will also show that there is invariably one goonda who dominates over a group of villages, even builds schools, gets funds and loans with the help of the MLA, seduces banks, and if any family goes against him, social boycott — no daughter of that family will be allowed to get married, nobody will draw water from "our" well.'

'Can't you take any action under the law?'

'Several sections of the IPC and anti-corruption law can be applied to such cases.' But who dares? Yet, the people know, and the politicians know, and in the end democracy triumphs. But sometimes police officers take it upon themselves to break up these cartels. The law will not help as evidence cannot be secured. So they beat up the goonda, leak matters to the press and to the opposition, and punish the SHO. Some win the contest; some go down, their bodies can be found scattered in the ministries in Delhi or in other escape hatches all over the country.

'This is not something unusual that has occurred in India; in all countries the police have passed

through this phase of political dominance. It is only when changes in governments occur at regular intervals that all political parties begin to realise that using the police for their own ends can be a very double-edged weapon.'

Barog

One more tunnel and we had reached Barog, and an extremely venerable man with a white beard opened the door of our rail car and asked us in for breakfast, obviously on behalf of the Emperor Babar. In the British days, this must have been a familiar haunt, beer time for Sahebs going to see the Mem Sahebs and the children sheltering in Simla from the heat of the sun.

Pramode and I sat down for breakfast in a place which seemed to be haunted with the ghosts of old Englishmen.

The magnificent Moghul wished us Godspeed, showered the choicest blessings on us and our descendents, and we left Barog with our respects to Babar for the nice omelette and coffee.

The Unwanted Officer

The police officer, I said to myself, who is firm and straight, who is ignorant even of the vernacular of corruption, he is the unwanted man today. Yet he is the salt of the service — a true professional — most unpopular with governments, and most popular with his men. He is the man who when a city is seriously threatened by disorder takes it upon himself to open fire to save large-scale destruction. When the judicial enquiry begins, he finds it impossible to recreate the atmosphere of panic, turmoil and fanaticism in which the decision had to be taken.

Constable

The male of the police constable species is obviously marked for extinction. In fact, he was congenitally obsolete. The Police Commission of 1902-03 saw to that. Over-worked, with the wrong duties, like being an orderly, standing for hours for a VIP who is running 6 hours late, guards at every point, the

colossal wastage of manpower all over. And that without rest, a house for his family, or promotion and without a kind word from anyone. He is expected to behave with impeccable courtesy with those who cannot conceal their hatred of him, and with restraint with those who want to break his head or knock out his teeth with a small gesture of political exuberance. And if a record number is killed each year, too bad! We will take the son in service (in the unlikely event of his being ready for recruitment) as a mark of respect to the dear departed. 'What hurts most,' a man said, 'is to stand on guard for a Minister who has several air conditioners and a comfortable house, and to do it without a place to lie down in except some leaky rat-infested out-house verandah which has been given to us because every inch of space is occupied by relatives and visitors.'

When the whole structure is redesigned, the constable as he is today will have to be reduced in numbers considerably. In his place, we must have a well-trained man, call him what you will, who will be able to deal with the public positively, who will be able to assist in the basic work of the police, which is to bring the offender before the court of law; not to punish the man himself.

The Police Stations

There are police stations in the land where men have to borrow money from each other to make a bus journey on duty, or a contractor obliges and makes it up out of the undertrial diet money. All over the country, the Permanent Advance given to run a police station is so low that scrounging for paper is a nationally accepted pastime of SHOs. Dead bodies have to be carried by men as 'begar'. There are innumerable Police Stations which are kept standing only by the grace of God. There are several where there is no electricity or telephone, and the remarkable fact is that in many States the money given by the Centre for Police housing or modernization is used to give bounty before the elections or used for other purposes. In

most States, there is no chair that can be offered to a visitor in a police station. There are several others where it has been thoughtfully arranged that there is no standing room for the staff.

And, the lock-ups of our free and democratic Republic are such that it seems as if all the worst smells of the land are compounded in some secret pharmacy and distributed by the Home Ministry to all police stations as a deterrent to crime. Some of these lock-ups are even considered harmless. They only smell of urine. There are others where vomit and blood and the humid atmosphere of sweat and rotting food produces a revulsion so strong that it is only years of a special type of therapy which enables men to work in those police stations.

Woman

One State (Punjab) has taken care to see that no woman is ever held in a police lock-up or called for interrogation. It is a tragic reminder of our Sita cult. Some people now want this to be extended to men also. There are other places (Himachal) where the woman constable is supposed to be on duty from 8 to 8, and in order to make the equation totally rational, she is made to walk 8 miles from her lines to the Police Station each day and to go back those 8 miles again. Some of the girls may have been taught that classic of the Jalianwala Bagh days by their grand-mothers and they may be chanting it as they trudge up and down the Simla Hills: 'Khudaya Kaisi Musibaton Men Jahan Wale Pade Huwe hai Kadam Kadam Par Unke Khatir Sitam Ke Jale Pade Huwe hai'.

What an impact that song had in the 20s, I told Pramode. Women cried, strong men wept, whole assemblies of men were moved with an emotion so intense, so bright, so wide-spread, that it got the country out to a man behind Gandhi. We seemed to have been a different people then.

'Which makes my point', said Pramode, 'that unless you have

struggle, endeavour and death, you cannot get the country moving forward. We are born in struggle, and die in a changeless government'.

'Our biggest fault' I said, 'is that we have considered everything difficult to change. We have peculiar inhibitions, a type of intellectual laziness. We distrust ourselves as innovators. This time we cannot afford to make that mistake without endangering the whole system itself.'

At Jatog, Pramode said that he had an important message to pass to the girl in the front seat. He wrote it down on a piece of paper and asked me to hand it over.

'Don't forget the pill, dear' — Zulfikar Ghose.

I laughed so suddenly that both of them looked back, and guiltily I stopped which made them self-conscious.

Evening in Simla

Pramode and I met again in a tea shop in Simla. It was one of those lovely days when it rains so much outside that you have the time to communicate and wander in your mind over the misty mountains.

He said, 'You know I have been thinking about all that you have said. To an outsider it is interesting but totally confusing. What is it that you want to do? I understand you want to make a bonfire of all the old laws and practices, but won't you need to say something else?'

'You are right. Today, I think I can stand on the cross-road and indicate the direction of reform.'

'I suppose there is no use trying to reform the police alone — the police is part of a system — the legal system, the whole of it seems to be in need of reform.'

'Exactly. You can't imagine the misery that we put the undertrials to. A colleague of mine, Professor Gore, and I paid a visit to jails in Bangalore and Bombay, and the conditions that we saw makes one

sad to see man's inhumanity to man.'

The convict, today, thanks to modern correctional techniques, the UN, and Reckless, and experts in the field, is treated with some consideration in most jails. There may be exceptions like the jail I have heard of where a prisoner is made to sit on his haunches with his hands out in front of him like an animal, in order to show submission and respect, but that is an exception. There may be many others where there is serious overcrowding. In Bangalore, the jail is a good one. The convict is treated well with numerous amnesties and remissions, furloughs, parole. The convict gets work and wages. He can meet his relations. In general he feels that he is a defaulter, and is prepared to accept his lot, and with a little 'push' he can even get a sinecure where he is as good as a free man.

Not so the undertrial, and there are more undertrials than convicts these days. For the undertrial there is only waiting and waiting, till a court finds the time to take up the case. Months and years pass by. He spends the whole day doing nothing. Premature old age may overtake him, the young person may be subjected to all the violence and perversion of a jail. Slowly, he slides lower and lower in the human scale: without work, without exercise, without a clean set of clothes, without any hope at all.

His only satisfaction is that the delay in taking up the case may help him to get an acquittal. The witnesses may fade away in a city, the sub-Inspector may get suspended, the court may get a spasm of energy in order to reduce the file and may acquit as many as possible. The man lives for that day when the judgment will be pronounced, and he hopes, as happened in one case, that he will get 10 days of imprisonment after spending 2 years in a jail as an undertrial, and that it will be set off against the period spent. About 50% of persons tried are in any case acquitted. 75% get less than six months. 6.38% get more than a year.

As we walked through the wards full of undertrials — young, old,

lean, dirty, all the unfortunates who could not get bail because of poverty, (or as in one case because he wanted to conceal from his parents that he had been arrested and taken into custody), I felt that most police and judicial officers are unaware of the ignominy and hurt that these men have to suffer, who may have broken the law, but do not deserve such a punishment before conviction.

There were two students accused of murder in November 1975. Committed to sessions in December 1975, the sessions trial commenced in February 1978, and was still going on in June 1978. Meanwhile one of them had broken jail, and was rearrested and brought back. There was a case of an old clerk. His story could have brought tears to many an eye, and all it did to me was to make me feel angry that we could treat a decrepit old man in this manner.

Pramode said, 'You remember what Maxim Gorky said when he saw a policeman beating an old Jew: 'No' one does not forget such outrages on a human being, let them never be forgotten.'

We heard strange stories in jail about justice in the land. The courts want disposal, so the lawyer says to the undertrial, 'plead guilty. We will arrange a stipulated sentence. You can go out free.' The computer takes over. 'Say you are over 16, or you will be in a certified school till the age of 18' Eight times an under-trial appeared in the court and there was no hearing. Each time someone was missing — public prosecutor, the defence lawyer — one accused, one witness, and so on till the half hour came which the court could spare for giving adjournments. The magistrate did not even look at the man that he was sending back to prison with a two-month date for future clearance.

The big racketeers of smuggling were detained, and then they apologized, and asked for forgiveness, and they were released and have now settled down to start a new life of prayer and meditation. But was a review made of the hundreds of

small men who got caught in smuggling? There was a man who brought in some watches. He has been 18 months in custody and the case has not even started. There were a number of boys who had been caught in house thefts. Do they have to wait for years and years for trial, and then be let off with a warning or on probation, while their masters rob the public at every corner?

On an average every day three or four undertrials are hurriedly released by the authorities because the sentence they receive is less than what they have spent as undertrials in jail.

‘What about the laws regarding probation and first offenders?’

The trouble is that all the talk about modern methods and compassion is only confined to international conferences. We ought to invite some international experts to see our undertrials, and I think it is only when a Louis Malle makes an offensive film that we will begin to take notice of the inhumanity that we are showing to the undertrials.

You need a dramatist to tell you the tragedy of young wasted lives, of prison riots, of the hates and fights and fury of a prison cell. In Bombay there were girls that had been caught soliciting in the streets and put into jail under section 100 of the Bombay Police Act under which any police officer can pick up a woman suspected of soliciting. A system has been devised whereby the fine hardly exceeds 5 or 10 rupees, but if they get into a court which is busy with other work they may spend days in jail.

I am sure a lot must be passing through the minds of these girls. They have heard of hotels and call girls and have heard of big sethias and mistresses, and all of them were free to carry on their trade without let or hindrance. What about the men who made advances? What about the man who telephones for a call girl, is he not soliciting? What a laugh it would be for the girls if they found the young men who accosted them in the street along with them in the lock-up for a few days.

So we have to change the law first, reduce the cognizable offences, simplify the procedure and empower Magistrates and Judges to deal summarily with as many cases as possible. A large number of simple cases must be made triable by nominated village courts or some such device. Retired officers could be used. The police should be able to give tickets for simple offences which collect in lakhs, and today end in smoke. Above all, we must ensure discrimination in procedures and bail so that we get the worst of them, and not commit harmless ones to jail for petty offences. We could form a committee to go through the jail each month and throw out those who can obviously be sent out without danger to society.

‘What about police reform,’ Pramode asked.

‘The police reform must begin with improving the status and functions of the constabulary, eliminating unfair and illegal practices in investigations and in dealing with law and order situations, making the officers scientific and objective in their thinking, and devoted to the welfare of their men, eliminating improper influences from any quarter and yet ensuring that the right balance between politician, policeman and administrator is maintained because that is the hallmark of a good democracy, giving the head of each force and each man the authority and tenure that he needs, and above all, and that is the touchstone of our effort, guarding the people from the fanaticism and unpredictable violence of our times, from the class and clan movements, and making each citizen feel that in a turbulent age, the police dealt with every man in a manner which made him feel secure and free.’

‘Very touching. *Jai Hind*. All that I can say is that if you get one-tenth of what you are aiming at, you will be lucky.’

‘That won’t bring on a heart attack. I will be quite satisfied,’ I said.

He laughed, that natural, loud, youthful laugh, which is the real hope that all of us are working for.

Time for new norms

L. K. JHA

ADMINISTRATORS, unlike poets, are not born but made. Whether or not the young men we recruit with such care turn out to be good administrators depends on the training and the treatment they receive. Almost all the administrative posts are now filled by members of services recruited and reared after Independence. If they do not come up to our expectations, we must ask not what is wrong with the administrator but what is wrong with the system in which he is brought up.

Forty years ago, H. Finner, the noted constitutional authority, in his book on the British Civil Service, pointed out that a good civil service

must combine 'technical efficiency with human serviceability'. To get the right man for the right job and to give him the right orientation are the most important requisites of good administration. What needs to be re-examined critically is the personnel policy pursued in the matter of postings and promotions as well as the system or the milieu in which the administrator operates.

The examination through which a public servant is recruited at best indicates that he has a good mind; but it gives no clue to the bent of his mind. The field of administration for which he has an aptitude has to be discovered in the first few years

of his service by trying him out in different assignments. And then he must be given the experience and training to equip him for higher responsibilities in the field. Administration is not an arena for the amateur — the so-called generalist — to vaunt his versatility

The need for specialisation was felt even under British rule. Great care was exercised to find out whether a young ICS officer would be better suited for judicial work or executive work, for field work or work in the Secretariat. Even among those who were selected for executive work, a further measure of specialisation was introduced in response to changing needs. Some I.C.S. men were taken into the Political Service, along with others picked up from the Indian army and the Indian Police, to serve in the Residencies in the princely States. In the thirties, a Finance and Commerce Pool was created by making an annual selection of promising young officers from the I.C.S. and other services such as the Indian Audit and Accounts Service and services dealing with revenues like customs and income tax.

The need for such specialisation in today's conditions, with our commitment to planning, development and social welfare and the State's direct participation in economic activity, is much greater. Talent spotting has to be supplemented by purposeful training.

In the British days the main reliance for such training was on specialised experience in selected field jobs. Those taken for the Finance and Commerce Pool were sent to offices of the Accountants General or to Collectorates of Customs or to the Reserve Bank of India to prepare for the higher administrative posts they were to hold. Study leave was also given, and officers assigned to judicial work often went to the United Kingdom to qualify as barristers. With the much greater need for expertise in administration we must seriously consider the possibility of more formal and systematic training being imparted to public servants at an appropriate stage in their career.

Side by side, we must examine whether there are any posts traditionally filled by drawing upon one service or another, for which it would be better to widen the field of choice and induct people from other walks of life. While for some of the older areas of governmental activity, it was safe to assume that only within government service would people of appropriate experience and expertise be available, there are a host of new activities — economic, scientific, technical and managerial — for which the requisite talent could be more abundantly found in the academic world or in business and industry.

In some instances government has tried to meet its more specialised needs by setting up some specialist services, such as the Indian Economic Service or the Indian Information Service. When a fairly large number of people belonging to a particular discipline, such as doctors to man our hospitals or civil engineers for public works, are needed on a regular basis, the forming of a service may well be the right answer. But there are some drawbacks which this approach suffers from.

Each service seeks to acquire vested rights in certain categories of posts and the oldest members of it try to pre-empt the top-most of them on grounds of seniority. Now, no doubt experience measured by the length of service must be a factor in selecting the right man for any post. But it should also be remembered that for certain purposes experience outside government service may be just as useful, if not more so, as experience under government.

Further, in certain types of work, where special talent or creativity is needed, a younger man may often do far better than an older one. Thus, many scientists, artists, economists and the like are known to give their best at a relatively young age. But when they belong to a service there is likely to be an inherent bias in favour of seniority.

The culmination of the quest for the right man for the right job must be in finding the best men for the highest jobs — from wherever they may be available.

But recent trends have been in directions wholly contrary to what has been argued above. There is little of specialised training. Although occasionally some administrators do go abroad for the purpose, when they return they are rarely appointed to posts in which the course they took would be useful.

Shortly after Independence, there was a strong move to create another pool at the Centre, like the Finance and Commerce Pool. But it was to be a pool of *general* administrators, whose only specialisation was to have a permanent career in Delhi. What came in the way was the howl of protest from civil servants in the States who saw in the proposal a threat to their own prospects of serving in the national capital.

One of the prime pre-occupations of personnel policy these days seems to be with devising a tenure system which would equitably apportion among the administrators the opportunities for a Delhi posting. But, often, exceptions to the tenure system have to be made for reasons good and bad, in the public interest or for private patronage. And when they become too numerous, the tenure terms are appropriately adjusted to accommodate them. In the process, the selection of candidates for the Finance and Commerce Pool has also been discontinued because its members were seen to monopolise coveted posts in Delhi.

The reason why the Pool at its inception was Central was that international trade, as well as fiscal and monetary policy, were then central subjects. Instead of doing away with the Pool, it would surely have been better to decentralise it and to harness the expertise of its members to serve the States in things like the promotion of handicraft exports, the development of cooperative banks and the administration of sales tax and agricultural income tax.

The reason why the services seem to shun specialisation is that they do not want to narrow their options in regard to opportunities for better posts — specially as avenues of ad-

vancement in different fields of specialisation are not seen to be equitably apportioned. Side by side, members of specialised and technical services have been asserting their claim to administrative posts, particularly in the Central and State Secretariats. They assert that the 'generalists' — as in their opinion administrators are and as in practice they are tending to become — cannot do justice to jobs which call for an increasing measure of specialisation and expertise. But, perhaps, what really irks the specialists is that they are paid less than those in the official hierarchy and in precedence they rank lower than the administrator who, they feel, lords over them.

The better paid 'selection posts' which were created outside the time scale were meant to be filled by the most meritorious candidates regardless of seniority. But there has been a pronounced trend for appointments to them to be made on considerations of seniority alone. The top-most post of Cabinet Secretary to the Central Government that an administrator can aspire to is usually allotted on the basis of seniority, and as it is he who recommends to government candidates for other top posts, the bias in favour of seniority over merit is gaining in strength. When departures from the seniority principle are made, there are accusations voiced, often in the press and legislature, of partiality and vindictiveness — alas! not always without justification.

Personnel policy today is precariously perched with powerful pulls from opposite directions. On the one hand, there are those who would argue that each administrator's claim to different posts should be determined by looking at his administrative horoscope, the service into which he was born, the year of birth and the position occupied by him in relation to those who entered service at the same time. But such a course would undermine efficiency. It would result in the posting of administrators to jobs to which they cannot do justice. It must also be remembered that both the stick and the carrot have a role to play in ensuring that every administrator does his best to serve the people. On the whole, it is rather difficult, perhaps a little too difficult,

to punish an erring administrator. If in addition the deserving cannot be rewarded, the public services could well turn into sinecures.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the dangers of posting and promotions becoming matters of patronage. Justice has to be ensured. There was a time when Girija Shankar Bajpai could be made a Secretary to the Government of India, in preference to many white members of the ICS years senior to him, and V P Menon could rise from clerical ranks to be one of the most important and influential secretaries without any protests against 'supersession'.

But things today are different. It is widely believed that when senior officials write the confidential character rolls of those serving under them they try to give a boost to those whom they favour. The Departmental Promotion Committees — the perfunctory presence of a representative of the Public Service Commission notwithstanding — no longer seem to inspire confidence. The fact that Ministers have so much say in so many appointments — including the post of the Secretary to their Ministry — encourages many officials to turn into courtiers and sycophants rather than honest servants of the public.

Some of the dangers of administrators becoming 'more loyal than the king' in order to secure personal advancement have been highlighted in the post-mortem on the Emergency. But they have not disappeared with it. If the bureaucracy gets politicalized, even free and fair elections — the bedrock of democracy — would become difficult if not impossible.

Reform is clearly needed. Some of the changes to rectify the obvious deficiencies can be considered on the administrative plane. But some of the issues that arise and which virtually pertain to the role of the administrator in our federal parliamentary democracy can only be resolved at political levels and would call for a national consensus among different parties.

In the administrative sphere, a number of things can be done in order to improve the quality and

calibre of the administrator. First of all, he must have a sense of security. This principle is accepted in most countries including ours. It is meant to ensure that the administrator can discharge his duties without fear or favour. The concept of security has a wider connotation than procedures to protect him from being punished unjustifiably. There have been cases of humiliation as well as of transfers of a nature and at a time which are calculated to cause hardship to officers who fall out of favour. Members of all-India services posted to States to which they do not originally belong are often treated as aliens.

Quite apart from the ill treatment that individuals may occasionally be victims of, civil servants as a class feel insecure in the material, economic sense. Senior administrators are not compensated for the steady erosion in their earnings caused by repeated bouts of inflation. On transfer, they face tremendous difficulties in finding tolerable living accommodation at a price they can afford and are often compelled to seek the assistance of the very people with whom they have to deal in their official life — thus compromising their independence. The education of their children too gets disrupted. It is not so much a question of pay scales but of care and concern for their well being — qualities which are displayed by the Defence Services in the way they try to look after those posted in outlying areas but which are lacking on the civil side.

Many of the weaknesses which the administrator seems to have developed stem from his search for security for himself and his family. If he wants to gravitate towards Delhi, if he is reluctant to specialise in any field of administration, if he favours seniority against selectivity in the matter of promotion and if he shuns the responsibility of taking any decisions, he does so because he seeks safety. The argument that an improvement in his living conditions will cost money ignores the cost to the country of inefficiency in administration.

The tensions which often manifest themselves between members of the administrative services and technical

services also have their roots in their service conditions. From a purely objective and commonsense point of view, two things seem to be beyond dispute. Firstly, in a democracy those who take the ultimate decisions — the Ministers and the Cabinet — cannot be technical experts. Their role is to decide, according to the mandate of the people, *what* has to be done rather than *how* it has to be done.

Their Secretariats too — which help them in the discharge of their responsibilities in resolving differences with other Ministries who may have different objectives in view, in getting appropriate budgetary allocations made, in answering parliamentary questions as well as in translating their policies and their decisions into operative sanctions and orders — have to consist of administrators rather than technical experts.

Secondly, it would be a waste of talent to ask people of high technical qualifications to battle with administrative problems of this kind as well as a miscellany of other chores such as transfers, promotions, grant of leave, drafting of speeches and letters and the like.

The real reason why the technical services want either a secretariat post or a secretariat status is that both in pay and in the warrant of precedence the Secretary is senior. There is no reason why this should invariably be so. The Chiefs of Defence Staff have a higher rank than the Defence Secretary. Really top-notch doctors, engineers, scientists, economists, etc., can well be paid more than a Secretary and accorded a higher place in protocol. Such a course would be far preferable to the solution of making a neuro-surgeon into a Health Secretary or turning a top builder into a Works Secretary so that they begin to write notes instead of doing the jobs for which they are specially qualified. As regards their feeling that they are apt to be over-ruled by Secretaries, their misgivings can be set at rest by making it a rule of business — as it was in the British days — that proposals from a Head of Department should not be turned down by the Secretary without going to the Minister.

While administrative changes and reforms of the nature discussed above can do much to tone up the administration, the basic question which can only be faced and resolved at a political level is the kind of relationship which should exist between the civil servant and his political masters. Two opposite schools of thought have emerged. One is symbolised by the concept of a 'committed civil service'. At the other extreme is the view that public servants should disobey orders which — in their opinion — are not in accordance with the law or the Constitution.

The theory and practise in different democracies seems to vary. In the United States, except for the President and the Vice President, most of the top executive posts including those of Cabinet Ministers are filled by political appointments made in the discretion of the President of people who do not belong to any of the regular services and who go out of office when the President does.

In Great Britain, the Prime Minister sets up his Council of Ministers by drawing upon M Ps and members of the House of Lords. But the Secretaries of different Ministries are drawn from the civil service. As sometimes Ministers also are designated as Secretaries and Under Secretaries, those belonging to the civil service are referred to as Permanent Secretaries or Permanent Under Secretaries, emphasizing their independent and secure status.

The Civil Service in France — particularly its *Inspecteurs du Finances* — are well known for their efficiency and power. In the inter-war years, when French Governments were notoriously unstable, it was they who provided a stable government to France. In some of the socialist countries the people who in our parlance hold Secretaries' posts are referred to as Vice Ministers. In West Germany, Secretaries are referred to as State Secretaries and sometimes come and go with their Ministers.

In essence, the system we have today is what we inherited from the British. One of the changes we

might straightaway consider is to stop referring to civil servants as government servants. This is not a matter of semantics alone. The use of the term government servant creates a wrong psychology in two ways: it gives the feeling to the administrator that he has to serve the government, and it also creates in him the feeling that his job is to govern rather than to serve. If instead we refer to him as a 'public servant' we shall perhaps give him the right orientation.

Even so the deeper issue will remain. Unquestionably, the public servant has to carry out the orders of his political masters. It is also his duty to advise those holding political office against any course of action which may be unsound or improper. In addition, when the law itself vests certain authority in or enjoins a course of action on a public servant — such as the responsibility which police officers at different levels have in dealing with crime — he should act independently. But the fearlessness and independence with which he is expected to act can be undermined if his future depends on pleasing his political boss. On the other hand, beyond a point his independence and security can lead to unhealthy trends of a different kind and, instead of being an effective and efficient instrument for fulfilling the mandate given by the people to the government, he can become a stumbling bloc. A balance between the conflicting considerations has to be struck. New norms have to be evolved and nationally accepted.

Not so long ago in Britain, despite its long and un-interrupted tradition of an efficient civil service respected for its integrity, it was found necessary to appoint a committee headed by Lord Fulton, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex with members drawn from the civil service as well as Parliament 'to examine the structure, recruitment and management, including training of the Home Civil Service and to make recommendations'. Perhaps the time has come for a similar high-powered body to be set up in India which could go into the deeper political issues along with the purely administrative ones.

Books

BUREAUCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION by V. A. Pai Panandikar and S.S. Kshirsagar. Center for Policy Research, New Delhi, 1978.

THE Indian bureaucracy periodically under fire since Independence for being static, rule-bound, unresponsive to development needs and alienated from the aspirations of the citizens whom it is meant to serve, has come in for particularly scathing criticism in the aftermath of the Emergency for the sorry role it played during that period. The long lurking conviction that something is rotten in the State bureaucratic apparatus appears to have been confirmed. And yet the basic material which goes to staff the government machinery is drawn from the same pool as that which provides workers for non-governmental organizations.

What is it, then, which makes government functioning relatively ineffective and unresponsive to the citizen's and developmental needs? Is inability to deliver the goods inherent in the nature of bureaucracy as a form of organization? Or is it because the Indian bureaucracy is an alien growth, grafted on to a body politic and a social milieu totally unsuited to

this imposition? What are the characteristics of development administration and how do they differ from those of traditional administration? Is it possible to adopt the existing structure to meet changing needs or is it necessary to scrap it wholesale and introduce new forms of government and administration?

Since government has inevitably to play a leading role in development, issues such as these need an answer and it is to these questions that Panandikar and Kshirsagar have addressed themselves through an empirical investigation of civil servants, serving in four government agencies engaged in development programmes, two in the agricultural sector and two in the industrial

Starting with the hypothesis that the present bureaucratic organization of the civil service in India is incompatible with its developmental role, the study aims at, a) empirically establishing the bureaucratic character of the civil service system in India, b) discovering the extent of development orientation of the civil service system, c) examining the factors in the personal and organizational life of the civil servants that are associated with their bureaucratic

and developmental orientation and d) examining the compatibility of the bureaucratic system of administration with the development functions.

To this end, the authors, after setting forth the characteristics of traditional bureaucracy as defined by various theories of bureaucracy in contrast to those of development administration like change orientation, result orientation, commitment to and involvement in work, and elaborating their research methodology, go on to describe the profiles of developmental personnel studied in terms of their demographic characteristics. They then present their findings relating to the nature and extent of the bureaucratization obtaining in the government agencies studied, the working climate of these agencies, the extent of adaptation of the civil servants and the agencies in which they serve to their developmental roles, and the relationships between the bureaucratic characteristics on the one hand and the requirements of the developmental role on the other. In conclusion, they give an overview of bureaucracy as a form of organization and its compatibility with development administration and, arising from this, the policy implications involved.

While it is interesting to note that the development bureaucracy studied has, in contrast to traditional administration, a younger age composition, a more rural rather than an urban and metropolitan background, is not dominated by the upper and upper middle classes and has higher levels of education, but like traditional bureaucracy operates under a closed career system, and highly inadequate formal training, the sample of 723 civil servants and 4 developmental organizations is too small for generalizing the conclusions, especially considering the mammoth size of the Indian bureaucracy.

Regarding the question whether the civil service in India is highly bureaucratic considering its key characteristics to be hierarchy, division of labour, system of rules, impersonality, rationality, and rule orientation, the authors find that it is in fact only moderately bureaucratic. Nor is it uniformly bureaucratic along structural and behavioural dimensions, the level of bureaucratic structure attained by an organization not necessarily corresponding with the level of bureaucratic behaviour displayed by it, suggesting that the bureaucratic structure is not the only source of bureaucratic behaviour and that forces determining bureaucratic structure and behaviour are not the same.

The working climate in an organization which includes practices like superior/subordinate relationships, entrustment of responsibility and authority, utilization of the capabilities of personnel, development of personnel, styles of management and of control and treatment of the citizen clientele, is an important determinant of the behaviour of organizational personnel and their efficiency in fulfilling development tasks. The authors come to the discouraging conclusion on the basis of their study

that, as in traditional organization, the new development oriented organizations are distinguished by a lack of high premium either on performance or on the development of their human resources and that the civil servants of these agencies perform their duties as routinely and with as little commitment or initiative as before.

Although one can have reservations about the reliability of respondents' answers to questions like, 'How much more responsibility would you like to have?' (I cannot see anyone honestly admitting 'very little'. Most would tend to say 'much more'. The pertinent question is whether given more responsibility they would in fact act differently.) There is no denying the fact that not enough incentives exist even in the newer government organizations to give of one's best or that there is room for development of the human resources through training.

Regarding the level of adaptation of the civil servants in development organizations to developmental administration in terms of change orientation, result orientation, citizen-participative orientation, and commitment to work, the study shows that the majority of civil servants are only moderately so adapted to the first three traits. They do not consider it the essence of their job to bring about changes in the values and attitudes of the citizen clientele. But as regards commitment to work, they are not as indifferent to their responsibilities as is generally made out.

An important finding is that, except education, the factors that influence development orientation among civil servants most are their environment and tradition and not their pre-employment life. However, the authors feel that whatever orientation towards development exists in the work atmosphere is not due to any training received by them towards this end and conclude that given such orientation training, the development outlook can well be strengthened.

Coming to the central question whether bureaucracy as an institution is relevant to developmental work, the authors conclude that bureaucratic behaviour on the whole is incompatible with the efficient performance of developmental functions by the civil servants because respondents who are highly bureaucratic in the behavioural sense are found to accept the developmental role to a lesser degree than respondents who show a lower degree of bureaucratic behaviour. However, they go on to point out that bureaucracies which are involved in development and 'receive' from citizens in the form of participation, in contrast to the traditional organization which 'gives' favours to citizens (licences, permits, etc.) tend to get structurally less rigid and behaviourally more responsive. Therefore, while the classical model of bureaucracy may be irrelevant for India, a bureaucracy modified, alerted and adapted to meet developmental needs can certainly be made meaningful.

They then outline four possible alternatives which can possibly replace the present bureaucratic organization:

- a) politicise bureaucracy, especially at the top level, so that there is an active and direct involvement of the political system in the actual implementation of development programmes, or
- b) develop grassroot institutions like the Panchayat raj to involve people in administration, or
- c) strengthen cooperative and voluntary organizations and enable them to play a greater role in administration, or
- d) involve people directly with official agencies at key performance level by setting up people's committees either functionally or in aggregate areas

Though experiment with these alternatives is essential, the authors feel that the bureaucratic structure modified and improved still has a part to play in development

Since a rigid and steeply vertical hierarchy, impersonality and rule orientation are the three critical characteristics of bureaucratic organization and behaviour which run counter to the needs of development administration, the authors recommended that the bureaucratic structure is modified by more flat organizations with a greater degree of informality, greater care in designing jobs and departmental systems and involvement of citizens to eliminate impersonalities and higher education to reduce rule orientation

While the other two suggestions sound eminently sensible, one doubts whether higher education alone can reduce rule orientation. One of the fall-outs of the Emergency has been to make even highly educated, very senior bureaucrats more rigidly rule oriented because it is not education but confidence and willingness to take risks, born of security and political support, which are more important to make civil servants stick their necks out. If the British civil servants in India took quick and bold decisions irrespective of rules, it was largely because of their innate confidence that they were right and would not be questioned.

In conclusion, in analysing the requirements of development administration, the manner in which the existing set-up falls short of needs, and following from this, some of the corrective measures that can be taken, the authors have done a good job. While their conclusions cannot be held universally valid, due to the limitations of a small sample, they do indicate certain broad trends and the book is a welcome addition to the literature on public administration and development.

Pushpa Sundar

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Communications

THE strict enforcement of the long-standing tenure rules for posts in the Central Secretariat, with rotation of IAS officers between the Centre and the States, has been generally welcomed. Press briefings have emphasised that these rules were increasingly breached in the recent past. One consequence was the denial of opportunity to more officers to gain the experience of working at the Centre. Another was to deprive the States for long periods of the services of some capable officers.

There is, however, another side to this picture. Not all the officers whose tenures were extended, perhaps not even the majority of them, were

retained in Delhi as a favour to them. Some of them had moved to the Centre under a scheme for creating a 'Central Pool', which provided for permanent deputation to the Centre. Others had their tenures extended because they had shown exceptional capacity in economic administration or in other areas which require a mastery of complex technical facts as well as general intelligence and analytical ability.

In the case of Additional Secretaries and Secretaries, the rotation between the Centre and the States had been introduced for the first time, and has raised some special problems. First, this

principle can only be applied to the IAS, and not to members of the Central services. Secondly, the reversion to the States of IAS officers serving at these levels at the Centre will often result in a reduction in salary. Thirdly, the rigid application of any new rule is likely to have arbitrary results, and some Secretaries have recently been reverted on the ground of their prolonged stay in Delhi, although they have served only 2 to 3 years as Secretary. (This may partly have been as a result of screening their initial selection during the Emergency, or their subsequent performance as Secretary, but the rotation principle has been given as the justification for reversion)

These reversions have, therefore, had a somewhat adverse impact on service morale. But the main issue here is one of career planning in the IAS and other services. The old system — under which an able officer in the service looked forward to a Secretaryship in the Government of India as the culmination of his career, which was followed by retirement — made a good deal of sense. In terms of the level of responsibility and job satisfaction, no position outside the Central Government can really compare with a Secretaryship, though the Chief Secretaryship (one post in each State) may run it close. It will always be difficult for able people to revert from responsibilities of an all-India nature to dealing with problems with a limited State-wide vision. The right answer for the future is surely to improve the process of selection of Secretaries, and then to let them serve out their remaining years of work at the Centre, weeding out only the occasional failure.

The abolition of the 'Pool' a few years ago was sought to be justified on the ground that it would restore 'fairness' as between members of the same service. It is doubtful whether any system can aspire to assuring equality of opportunity to all members of a service at all stages of their careers. But, the adoption of the rotation system as an inflexible rule means that members of the IAS will not at any time in the future be permitted to specialise in any technical or economic area.

A modern administrative system demands such specialisation. Continuity of experience would be desirable in the administration of agriculture and the social services, but it is indispensable in the management of industry, commerce and finance. State Governments offer only a limited scope for training in these fields. Scope for specialisation in (say) the planning of steel or chemical industries, investment appraisal, macro economic analysis for policy-making, foreign trade negotiations, defence planning, etc., exists only in the Central Government. It is not really possible to build up the level of expertise needed for efficient performance in these areas, if officers have to rotate between these activities and district administration or State-level policy-making throughout their careers.

So far as the IAS is concerned, career planning based on the rotation principle as now adopted can only result in the gradual replacement of officers of the service by those of the Central services — who are not subject to the unlearning process to the same extent — in all senior positions in the Economic Ministries. This must eventually affect the calibre of recruitment to the service.

The solution to this problem of reconciling efficiency with equity is to retain the rotation principle generally but to reconstitute an 'Economic Pool'. This might consist of some 50 or 60 officers only, selected from all the services as well as from public sector industries. Entry would be at the level of Deputy Secretary (say about 12 years service) with a screening after five years. Those confirmed in the 'Pool' after screening would be available to the Central Government for specialised positions in the Economic Ministries and would not be subject to reversion to their parent organisations. This would, of course, amount to creating an elite group, but that is inescapable, and indeed necessary in any efficient meritocratic system.

Let me add another footnote. The restrictions on civil servants by way of curbs on drinking in public or on the acceptance of jobs by their wives and children, or the withdrawal of government housing facilities from officers owning houses in Delhi, are all discriminatory in varying degrees. Courts would probably hold some of these restrictions to be unreasonable and therefore not enforceable. It is asked, why do some senior officers therefore not challenge these in the courts? The answer is, first, these rules are not completely arbitrary, and each has some justification, though possibly inadequate. In the case of drinking, one cannot escape the fact that many officers did avail themselves of business and diplomatic hospitality too freely. As to jobs, both conflict of interest and vulnerability to influence are genuine possibilities.

As to the housing rule, it should be recalled that officers owning their own house in Delhi were ineligible for allotments of government houses till around 1968. When the rule was re-introduced in 1975, the justifications offered were

(i) There is, and will continue to be, a shortage of housing for officials in Delhi. As the allotment is by length of stay and seniority, relatively junior officers, who are less able to pay market rents for private housing, have to do without government houses, while senior officers get them at a considerably subsidised rent. Therefore, if those who have their own houses are forced to move to them, this would relieve the pressure and benefit other non-house-owning officers.

(ii) Almost all officers owning houses in Delhi, and certainly those in senior ranks, have built

...on loans which has been allotted at a concessional rate. Many have also financed their houses from government loans and LIC loans at concessional rates of interest. Some have more than one house or houses capable of being let in two flats.

It was recognised that these officers, who had built for investment, and had loans to repay, would be placed at a disadvantage compared to those who might have other kinds of property or have houses outside Delhi. Suggestions were made to the Works & Housing Ministry even in 1975 that the penalty for continued occupation of government housing should not be so severe as to cause hardship in genuine cases of officers unable to repay loans except out of rentals. Under the post-Emergency rules, if a house has been let out at a rent upto Rs. 1000 per month, the owner can have government housing without penalty. If he gets rent between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000 per month, he can retain a government house by paying twice the normal rent, which is still a reasonable sum. It is only for rentals above Rs. 2000 per month that a high penal rent is charged for government housing, though even this rate is lower than before.

To return to the reactions of civil servants, the idea of suing government for 'rights' of this sort is repugnant to most of us. Officials tend to sue for preferment or against disciplinary action, and in such cases the senior ones, who are after all a part of the policy-making apparatus, identify themselves with the 'Government'. Even if a policy curtailing service rights is considered mistaken, the normal civil service reaction would be to make representations for effecting changes. That is, we assume a certain rationality on the part of the government.

In any case, in the present state of low esteem in which the civil service rightly finds itself after the Emergency, the effect on public opinion of officials suing for the right to drink in public (mostly at other people's expense) or to retain large bungalows at subsidised rents would hardly be favourable.

Seminarist,
New Delhi

THIS refers to your issue on Centre-State relations. In decentralization, there are two possibilities affecting Centre State relations. As regards powers, the States would get more powers than are provided presently by the Constitution. In full autonomy, the States are given the status of independent units and only matters that concern all the States are to be looked after by the Centre. Accordingly, the Centre retains the powers in regard to defence, foreign affairs, currency. This strikes one as a

moderated form of the Common Market and could be called the Indian Common Market. This radical and abrupt step at this juncture is not beneficial to the country.

In the past, the British colonial policies and the policies of the last 30 years have created regional imbalances. It is a well known fact that there is a concentration of industries in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. This served British interests to begin with and since independence the trend has been accentuated.

If autonomy is granted now, inequality will perpetuate itself. Corporate tax, wealth tax, income tax will become State subjects. If present statistics are a guide, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Calcutta and Madras account for 66% of the value of wealth and income tax. This will make some States financially sound at the cost of other States.

Another problem that may crop up will be the contribution of different States to defence. The southern States may not be enthusiastic about contributing much, since defence is not a major problem for them.

Each State is at liberty to have its own foreign collaboration of trade agreements. It is common knowledge that economic relations have an impact on foreign policy. When the States work out their own economic policy, they may develop independent relations with different countries. How then can the Centre have a uniform foreign policy?

These days if atrocities are committed in a particular State, there is a national debate and awareness and concern at national level. Autonomy may discourage this attitude.

The second possibility is giving more power to the States. Rajni Kothari envisages this step may lead to more participation of the people and make democracy meaningful. There is a difference between bureaucratic decentralisation and democratic decentralisation. In a bureaucracy more powers are given to the permanent executives. How can this facilitate more participation by the people? How far are the people interested in participation? Again, Kothari says, 'we have a half-hearted democratic frame-work, a centrally monitored federal set-up, an all India officialdom that overpowers representative bodies at all levels and centralizes relations between them, and a highly centralized party hierarchy in which the composition and continuation of the State Government are at the mercy of the High Command'.

The answer lies in dependence on Indian culture. To quote Gouranga P. Chattopadhyaya, 'If, however, Indian child-rearing practices, the values emanating from the joint family, the caste system, and the impact of a 3000-year old culture are behind

this lack of mobilisation, are the main causal factors for not producing creative change agents, obviously it is pointless blaming any particular section of the society. As a matter of fact, it will be a highly useful exercise if one were to extend one's field of observation to the trade unions and find out the nature of the relation between the leaders and followers; perhaps one of the reasons for the slow emergence of grass roots leadership lies in the presence of the dependency myth even in that field. What is being suggested here is that perhaps the politically oriented and highly experienced professional trade union leader tends to treat the rank and file members as dependent subordinates who should not raise "unnecessary" questions or try to be innovative.' (May 31st, 1975, *Economic & Political Weekly*.)

The abject dependence of the followers on leaders is conspicuous in all walks of life. A child is made to feel he is dependent on his parents. The same attitude prevails among teachers, directors of research organisations, managers, etc. How many independent decisions does an Indian take? Is not an Indian trained to respect authority more than himself?

Rajni Kothari feels that decentralisation can check the people's hysteria of charisma and belittle the role of the personality cult. This is a simplified analysis. The reason for the dominant sale of charisma and personality cult lies deep in the particular situation of a country or its culture. A small country like Germany accepted Hitler as their leader. The German ego was hurt by the Versailles treaty and Hitler could boost the morale and raise the prestige of the country.

India's ego was hurt in 1962 in the India China war and after 1965 Indians wanted a leader who could take tough decisions and Indira Gandhi projected this image. Again, the magic spell of her charisma could hold the people perhaps due to the 'Bakhti-cult or Sakti cult'. It is interesting to note that after the imposition of the Emergency, 'Jai Santoshima', a mythological film, was a roaring success. Interestingly, other films flopped. In this film there was a reference to a crisis-ridden family and how 'Jai Santoshima' could stave off the disaster. I think it is far fetched to believe that decentralisation can check the role of charisma.

Another suggestion linked with decentralisation of powers is the creation of smaller States. The usual example of Haryana is cited to support this view. Smaller States can certainly lead to an ethnically homogenous unit, but it is difficult to infer that it can lead to more participation of the people. In Haryana it was the centralization of powers that guided decisions and the implementation of development projects. The other reasons for economic progress in Haryana could be the enterprising nature of the people and their perception of progress. They were already prepared

for development. It is good to encourage people to think of their problems and solve them by themselves.

The people in backward areas can be motivated to do so but it is an illusion to believe that they do not require external help. To quote Dr. B R Ambedkar, 'The love of the intellectual Indian for the village community is of course infinite if not pathetic. It is largely due to the fulsome praise bestowed upon it by Metcalfe who described them as little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations.

'But those who take pride in the village communities do not care to consider what little part they have played in the destiny of the country. That they have survived through all vicissitudes may be a fact. But mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived — surely on a low, on a selfish level. I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. I am therefore surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit'.

Deshpande in his research found that backward castes do not favour rural industrialisation. (*The Times of India* on 19-7-1978). The devolution of more powers to the villages would tighten the hold of the middle castes. This could aggravate the situation and harm the interests of the other minority castes. Democracy has no meaning when 51% is the majority and 49% a minority. A decentralised polity does not mean the absence of a centre. There must be a centre which can co-ordinate activities of the various States and formulate certain common objectives. It must be given the powers of an ombudsman to see that States spend the amount on agreed objectives and solve the grievances of the people arising out of impersonal, bureaucratic decisions. M N Roy visualised the role of a 'Clearing House' for the Centre. (The details of this idea is not known). Decentralisation has to be done in stages. What the stages are I am not clear.

M N Roy impressed upon others the need to decentralise powers way back in 1947. He could foresee the shortcomings of the communist and capitalist systems. He could foretell the impending crisis in the country if the British parliamentary system were adopted.

Decentralisation of the political system is not just a question of bargaining of powers between the Centre and the States. To make it meaningful there is need for a theoretical framework that considers the economic structure and organisation, cultural

requirements, role of bureaucracy and ombudsman, etc. As decentralisation needs an attitude of mind which believes that man can shape the world, it is faith in man and man alone that can take us to the desired path. This is the basic difference in approach between Gandhiji and M N Roy. Gandhiji's ideas are religious-based but Roy's foundation is humanism. There is scope for a synthesis of the two but humanism is the foundation we need for this superstructure

T S. Ramnarayan,
Bombay

At a very primary level, the function of administration became inherent in human society when it was organised beyond the size of a small tribe. An administrator became inevitable by the very fact of dominance and subjecthood in the physical living of human individuals, arranged in terms of interdependence arising out of specific circumstances. The size of the social enterprise in space, time and range of abilities, necessitated coordination and control in accordance with the prevalent, often unarticulated, norms and expectations which elicited collective allegiance. There was a need for areas of command and areas of compliance manifest in the form or ownership of authority and subjecthood

Further, the genre of technological patterns (before 'technological revolution') that came to be adopted involved a vertical nature of enterprise with an implicit hierarchical centralisation of wisdom and authority. It has to be borne in mind that the effects of administrative function were, *ab initio*, intentionally external to the human individual being administered to, in that they brought about a socially convenient arrangement of artifacts and resources as a physical collective prerequisite for a broader individual well being.

In historical time, the characteristics of administration varied with geographical, material and political influences. The regions of emphasis varied from the military to the metaphysical, within the overall administrative goals. Introduction of mass literacy and mass production created new forces in the human society with an implicit mutual conflict. Literacy tended to deepen and extend the private space of human sensibilities and thereby build regions beyond the span of social administration whereas mass production tended to generalise a wide range of physical requirements upon a few technologically determined prototypes and, thereby, bring in additional areas into the realm of administration. Both these forces have been continuously influencing the perceptions and practices of the administrator. Till today, a third force or even a resultant force of the two of comparable magnitude has not emerged.

Against this background, certain general characteristics of an administrator can be identified.

- (i) An administrator in his/her function is an extension of the ruler. The fundamental impetus remains at the level of original tribal leadership.
- (ii) In contemporary sizes of social organisation, an administrator is also a subject, owing to the diversity and specialisation of administrative functions. On the personal plane, today's administrator oscillates across the ruler ruled dichotomy.
- (iii) An administrator owes his/her position to the sovereign and not to the populace. The general thrust of his/her allegiance and responsiveness remains upwards, resulting in a sense of immunity from the mass of concerns in his/her domain.
- (iv) Following from his/her direction of loyalty, is an enhanced sensitivity to the dominant norm irrespective of the content of the same. This pattern of sensitivity is often disguised in the form of 'neutrality' towards opposing norms and even pride in the 'professionalism'.
- (v) An administrator, by training and instinct, is devoted to the concept of order and that of continuity. Often this devotion to the concept is in an abstract form and considerable energy is expended to achieve the formal appearances of orderliness and unruffledness, ranging from dresses to diplomatic objectives.
- (vi) The administrative system inculcates in its individual members a strong sense of collective allegiance and of collective infallibility. Administrative systems of long standing often display startling signs of filial connectedness.

These characteristics, in themselves, need not connote virtue or evil. That they appear so consistently negative is a reflection of the feeling of inadequacy towards the style and content of contemporary administration. The world-wide nature of this disenchantment only aggravates its significance. The temptation to demand a thorough review of the objectives and methods of administration is strong, but there are formidable difficulties even at the level of theoretical comprehension and it should engage the best of minds from a wide range of disciplines.

The contemporary Indian administrator, while displaying the characteristics mentioned above, has some more peculiar features. His/her ethos and style have their genesis in the ICS system which, significantly, was thought essential to provide 'continuity' at the time of transfer of power in 1947 even by the 'revolutionaries' responsible for the



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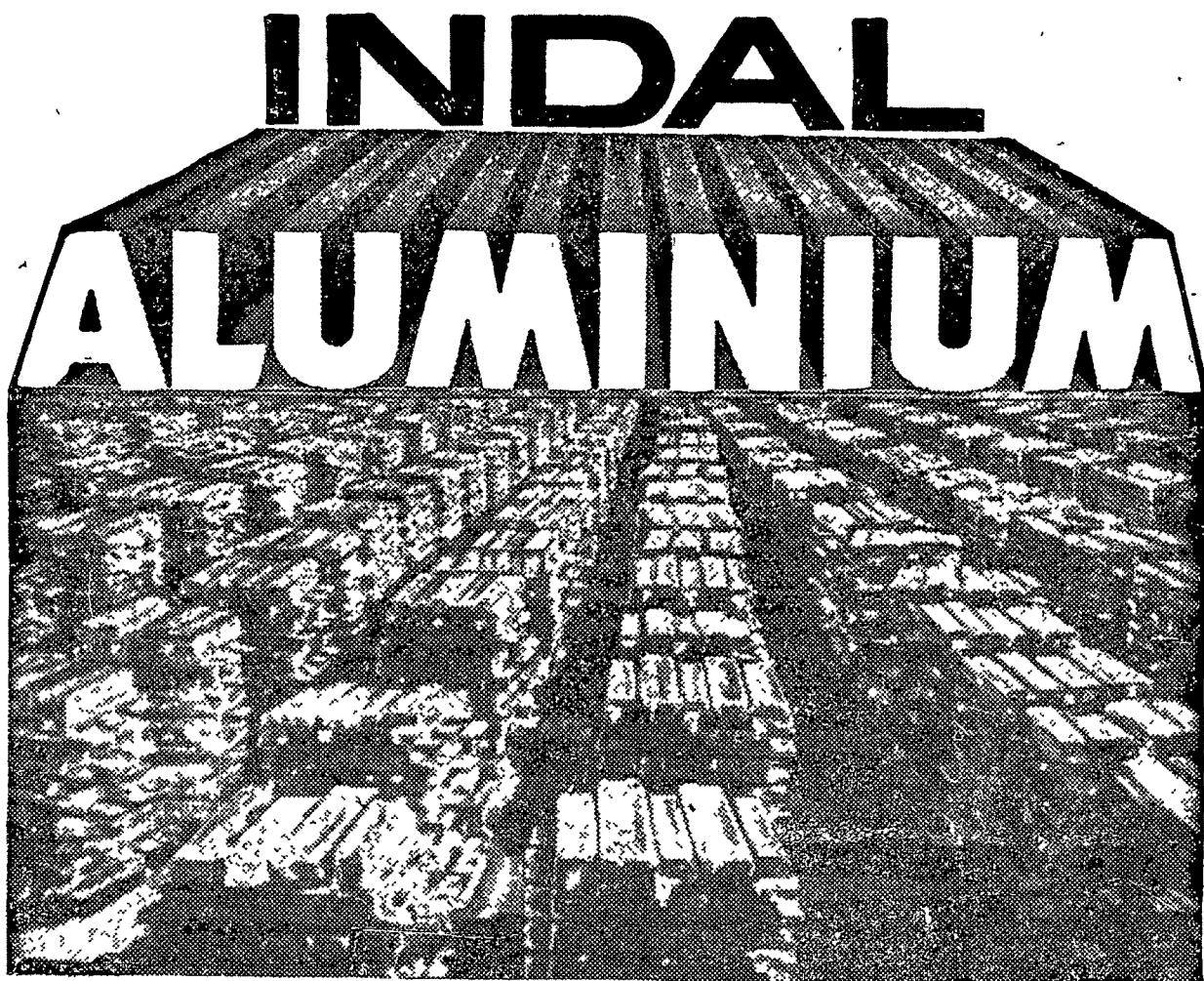
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event. The present administrative system has grafted upon itself the recruitment criteria, training procedures, methods and standards of the older system. There are various theories to explain the phenomenon, none of them wholly adequate. The issue is of historical interest. But that error has largely determined the fundamental cultural ambivalence of today's administrators. The 'roots' of an administrative system can be, and does get, talked about on a plane of facile glibness but it has a meaning deeper than that, which informs the underlying cognitive structures, objectives and methods of an administrative system.

This cultural rootlessness is overlaid with linguistic and caste loyalties which are the more expedient ways of acquiring *some* social base. Further, there are the older dichotomies peculiar to the 'Indian mind', like between belief and practice, monetary greed and spiritual renunciation, personal purity and civic abasement, etc., very little can be expected from the system by way of reform except minor adjustments in India and, indeed, the world, so long as only the functionaries of the system are entrusted with such a task.

Taposh Chakravorty,
New Delhi

AFTER thirty years of our independence, the Indian administration is still colonial oriented. The entire bureaucratic concept continues to be based on controls, checks and curbs. In the present context each functionary owes his allegiance and loyalty to the person above him in the administrative hierarchy, who writes his confidential report. There is no scope for him to seek public approval for his work and efforts ...

In spite of the fact that the jeep which is inefficient and rather an expensive vehicle to run and maintain, our government has provided a large number of government functionaries in different departments with this vehicle in the hope of making them more mobile and capable of negotiating difficult terrain to reach remote villages to bring relief and succour to the down trodden millions. But, instead, these vehicles have become status symbols and are mostly used on metalled roads on errands which seldom serve any public purpose and are quite often of a private nature. Each jeep means adding a driver to the domestic help of the officer concerned. Every officer provided with a jeep should be made to drive the jeep himself and maintain it and practise the humility of soiled hands. All government jeeps should have a distinctive paint and special number plates to facilitate detection and their log books should be available for public scrutiny.

Go to any court and invariably the magistrate does not turn up on time, and on many occasions he does not show up at all, as he is busy dancing attendance on some visiting minister or senior

officer. The people with their lawyers to whom they have paid heavy fees, are made to wait the whole day and no one has the courtesy to inform them that their cases are not likely to be taken up and have been postponed to another date. In the evening every one packs up and goes home disappointed, having wasted money and time. They are obviously dispensable — why should a magistrate bother about their convenience? Why does not our government introduce a system of keeping work logs to scrutinize the timings and work load of every magistrate. Don't our citizens deserve any sympathy and consideration or is this callous harassment a part of their destiny.

Take the case of our rural development. More than 90% of our village level workers don't even live in villages — the village level worker, the sugarcane kamdar, the cooperative man, the agriculture inspector, animal husbandry man and the university extension worker are all there to help the poor villager but, as there is no way of coordinating their efforts, the overlapping responsibilities result in confusion and their total impact on the village economy is if anything minimal and the common man continues to suffer.

The only way of improving this chaotic situation is to introduce a system of opinion polls for determining the popularity and effectiveness of every public servant. It will also be useful to introduce a system of watch dog committees of conscientious social workers to keep an eye on the performance and effectiveness of different government functionaries.

Since independence there has been a tremendous expansion of our bureaucracy but unfortunately the efficiency of our public service has, if anything, deteriorated in direct proportion to the increase in the numbers. Instead of the common man receiving a devoted service he has been isolated and the distance between him and the government functionary has, if anything, widened beyond repair.

Our politicians instead of reviewing and amending the functioning of our administration with a view to improving and fostering the spirit of public service, are sitting tight to maintain the status quo in the interest of their own protection and survival.

In a poor and developing country like ours, we solely need a spirit of entrepreneurship for taking calculated risks and the courage even to make mistakes for ensuring progress and advancement, but not an outmoded bureaucracy for maintaining the status quo. After all, mistakes are the price of progress and unless we display courage to change the entire concept of our present administration, there is no hope for the future of this unfortunate country.

H S. Sandhu,
Rudrapur

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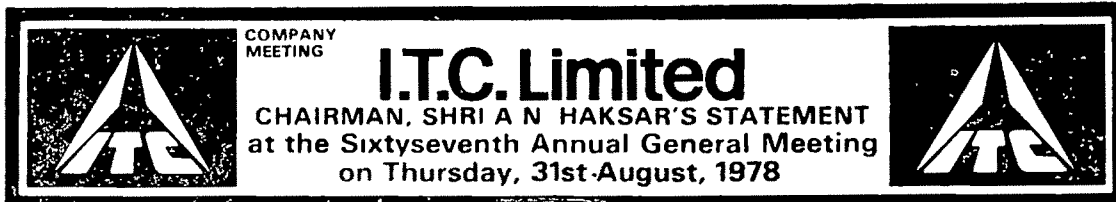
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Seminar Issues

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- The Administrative Jungle** a symposium on the contours of a major obstacle to national development SEMINAR (85). September 1966
- A Committed Civil Service** a symposium on a current controversy SEMINAR (168) August 1973
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A. INTRODUCTION

As I do every year, I must once again plead that the Government take a broader and more liberal view in giving the Tobacco and Cigarette Industry relief from the extremely onerous and gigantic Excise Duties which are making a valuable, comprehensive, economic activity progressively sicker. I submit that this plea is particularly meaningful bearing in mind that Cigarettes account for only 25% of the Tobacco consumed in India, and that the Industry's lack of adequate viability can adversely affect the well-being of literally tens of thousands involved directly in it and in its vast forward and backward linkages; furthermore, a more balanced view is appropriate considering India has one of the lowest per capita consumption of cigarettes in the world and, as stated in a Report of the Tobacco Excise Tariff Committee, such a level with an expanding volume with the growth of population does not warrant a harsh attitude on the part of the Government.

B. SOCIAL AUDIT — FULFILLING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

I would like, this year, to do a **SOCIAL AUDIT OF ITC FULFILLING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES** in qualitative values substantiated in numerate terms within the three fundamental priorities of **FIRSTLY: Nation and the Economy** **SECONDLY: nation and People** and **THIRDLY: Nation and Society.**

C. NATION ORIENTATION AND THE ECONOMY:

In Economic terms, whereas

PROFIT is the true measure of performance rather than the only central inspiration and motive, **NATION ORIENTATION** means subordinating and enmeshing the objectives of the Company with those of **NATION**, in the conviction that the enterprise will progress to the extent that our society and country prosper. I submit that the owners of ITC who, in the majority, are the Indian public and, in the minority, residents of the U K, can claim that the Company functions in the **NATIONAL INTERESTS** of India

1. INHERENT MOTIVATION TO NATION-ORIENTED ETHOS:

To begin with, in ITC there is no single individual, family or personalised ownership representing even as little as 1% of the shareholding. In the absence of any ownership pressure groups, Executive Management can only take an objective approach, are conversant with issues of the day beyond the business world making them interested and devoted to the commonweal, not simply the economic rationale, but also the larger issues of National Interest and what is optimally the most objective balance while managing the investments of the average man. Indeed, even in their own self-interest, such Professional Manager Trustees can only derive their own satisfaction by subserving the Public Good.

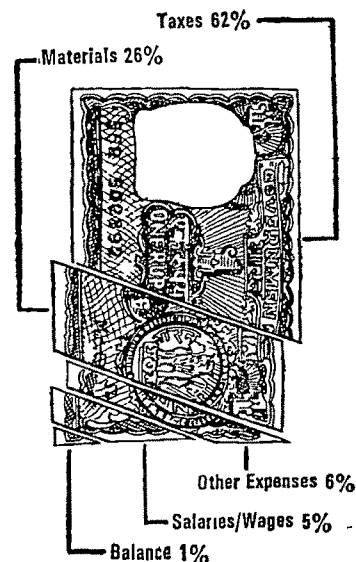
2 THE NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL — NO CONFLICT OF INTERESTS:

ITC can, perhaps, claim to be a **NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL** without conflict of interests in ownership and yet having windows

open to the International scene through its enlightened and entirely Professionally managed overseas Shareholders who continue to assist with R & D, Technology and Export associations without any special considerations in the shape of fees, royalties or reimbursement of expenses

3. NATION ORIENTATION AND LARGENESS.

I would submit that largeness is not only economically inevitable, it is also an essential element of the industrial and commercial product mix in a variety of investments, products and International competitive needs. I would further submit that it is the culture and philosophy with which an enterprise conducts itself, rather than size, that is of material significance. In the case of ITC the Income of Rs 385 crores is large but significantly the distributive justice of this is evident from its breakdown for the year under review which is as follows.



	Value Rs. Crores	%
Gross Income	385	100
All Taxes of Government	238	62
Residual Turnover	147	38
Costs of Tobaccos/ Materials	99	26
All expenses inclu- ding Depreciation	23	6
Available residual turnover for distribution	25	6
All salaries — wages — to people	21	5
Balance available to shareholders	4	1
Distributed to shareholders	3	0.75
	1	0.25

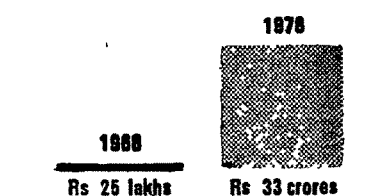
To these figures I would like to add a few more significant factors. During the last ten years ITC has collected and contributed Rs 1,520 crores for Government for public deployment, has directly applied Rs. 71 crores into investments to provide growth and employment and Rs. 12 crores of the shareholders' earnings have been retained for ploughback into the business. As against this, the approximate average earned by the average Indian investor for the year completed was approximately Rs. 285/-. I believe that the shareholders of ITC can say that their Company needs to be distinguished amongst largeness as part of the National Sector and that its bigness works for the Public and Consumer goods

4. NATION ORIENTATION— GROWTH & INVESTMENT:

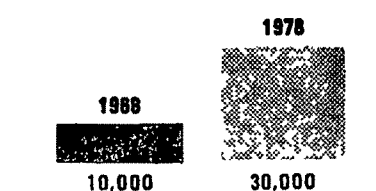
Creation of wealth and investment therefrom are the surest democratic means of creating employment which itself is a prime ingredient to overcome disparities and spread distributive social justice. The key audit question is whether such Growth and Investment subserve National Interests? May I humbly submit that ITC's entire programme of Development and Diversification has been geared to National priorities related to resource mobilisation, earning foreign exchange, creating employment,

investing in the priority and core sectors, aiding backward areas, generating rural development, assisting ancillary small scale sector growth and playing its part in the areas of Research and Development

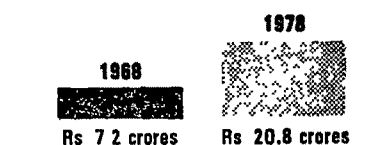
1) Foreign exchange earnings



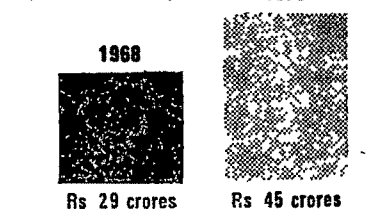
2) Employees



3) Wage Bill



4) Shareholders Equity



ITC's foreign exchange earnings have risen from Rs. 25 lakhs ten years ago to Rs. 33 crores today. Apart from the traditional business workforce of around 24,000 including seasonals, the new investments and activities have created another 6,000 jobs directly providing livelihood to around 30,000 people in a brief period. This figure will continue to grow. The total wage bill has increased from Rs 7.22 crores per annum 10 years ago to Rs. 20.81 crores in 1977-78. The Hotels Division represents a priority area earning foreign exchange, is labour intensive for both the educated and uneducated, aids small scale sector

ancillaries as suppliers and provides self-employment for a substantial number. The Foods Division is labour intensive, aids development of backward areas and weaker sections of society, earns foreign exchange and represents very high risk for which Government needs to take a liberal approach to allow use of external technology and know-how. Bhadrachalam Paperboards, a promotion of ITC, is in the Capital intensive priority core sector, will assist overcoming of shortages, has export potential and the investment is located in a backward area where already it is benefiting the people of the region. ITC has taken a direct interest in the development of 108 independent small scale units who employ around 4,000 people and have a turnover of around Rs. 12 crores of which ITC's offtake constitutes 30%.

In the context of rural development, special mention is to be made of the Leaf Tobacco Division's activities which provide a comprehensive Farmer Service to tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat. ILTD also assists in the provision of inputs to farmers such as fertilizers, insecticides and pure seedlings and a group of over 100 Managers and Supervisors deal directly with 70,000 farmers giving them development assistance. Furthermore, in a period of 4/5 months ILTD purchases directly from more than 70,000 farmers tobacco worth Rs. 34 crores which is paid for in cash. Research & Development is carried out continuously for all product developments and in its Integrated Research Centre, at Bangalore supported by the Research Centre at Rajahmundry and the Experimental Agriculture Station at Hunsur. As a result of this ITC can claim that it has been responsible for making the Tobacco and Cigarette Industry self-sufficient in India.

5. NATION ORIENTATION — NATIONAL SECTOR AND SHAREHOLDERS.

ITC's Management have increased the Shareholders' equity in ten years from Rs. 29 crores to Rs. 45 crores and the return on their investment. Shareholders have also been given a 1 for 5 Bonus Issue and the Dividend of 15% will, in the least, be maintained on the larger issued equity.

D. THE NATION AND PEOPLE

1. THE COMPANY — EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.

Long before the Code of Discipline in Industry was evolved in 1957, ITC was among the first to encourage the formation of Unions and to confer formal and real recognition on representative Trade Unions on the principle of "ONE UNIT-ONE UNION". In the last two decades alone no less than 150 Agreements-cum-Joint Minutes were successfully concluded and implemented, each of these has provided the thrust for higher productivity and taken the employees closer to their aspirations thus improving their quality of life

How mutually beneficial such an enlightened industrial relations policy has been, can be judged by the fact that manpower productivity in the Indian Tobacco Division, for example, has increased by well over 38% in the last six years. The rise in productivity has also been more than matched by the rise in earnings of the individual employees. It is through our principles of productivity negotiations that we have been able to demonstrate to the employees the efficacy of securing an improvement in the standard of living at the same time advancing Corporate objectives.

ITC's pioneering new concepts in the Management of Human Resources was formally recognised by FICCI through its Award for "Corporate Initiative in Industrial Relations" in 1971 followed by the Indian Merchants' Chamber Award in 1973. In 1973 ITC commissioned the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies and the Bombay University to do a Research Project on "The Aspirations of Employees in the late 70s and the 8th decade of this century". The results of this Study will assist ITC's Personnel Strategy and Policies for the next round of Long Term Agreements and in the years to come with our experts constantly watching the relevant indicators.

2 THE COMPANY — MERITOCRACY — FAIR REWARD

ITC's respect for human dignity and belief in self-esteem are exemplified in its remuneration policy of "Pay-

ment By Results". At the individual level MERIT is the sole basis for potential development and career advancement. At the collective level Productive and Divisional Performance indices are among the yardsticks used for improvement in terms and conditions of employment

This belief in growth and career advancement based on Merit is evident from the fact that over 95% of Divisional Board Members and Senior Managers and 100% of the full time Corporate Directors started their career as "Pupils" or "Trainees" on probation. A further proof covering all levels of employees lies in the fact that in the India Tobacco Division, as an example, more than 40% of Management Staff have risen from the ranks of Unionised employees; a number of them are currently holding positions in Senior Management. Within Meritocracy age has been no barrier.

Annual Bonus in your Company has long been linked with Productivity in the Traditional businesses. As a further step towards eliminating any dichotomy of approach between the various types of employees, namely Unionised and Management, Annual Bonus even for Management in the India Tobacco Division is now linked to the same Productivity Index as for Unionised employees with a further proviso that Management must also show an improvement in their personal performance rather than rely on perquisite oriented terms and conditions of employment. Similarly, in other Divisions too, Management remuneration and the terms and conditions of employment are in conformity with norms applicable to the new businesses and in consonance with the results actually achieved.

I would like once again to comment on the subject of reduction in disparities of income. In the latest Report & Accounts no less than 49 Unionised employees feature amongst those earning more than Rs 36,000/- per year. With progressive increases in D.A. linked to the cost of living index and the improved terms emanating from Long Term Agreements there has been yet further reduction in disparities and in many instances Unionised employees earn more than Management

at Superintendent and even middle levels. In the India Tobacco Division, for example, the gross average annual cost of an Unionised employee is now around Rs 12,000/- giving a ratio of less than 1:2 for the average cost of management at lower levels and 1.5:5 for the average of all levels of Management.

The Government are rightly seized of the problem of disparities of income and the present open ended system of compensation for increased cost of living needs to be examined in all its ramifications

3. THE COMPANY — ENRICHING THE HUMAN RESOURCE — QUALITY OF LIFE.

ITC takes a two-dimensional approach to the Enriching of the Human Resource so that improvements in both the standard of living and the quality of life can go hand in hand. The first dimension is the MATERIAL. Self-help Welfare activities have been aligned to fundamental needs or wants such as.

(1) Cooperative Credit Societies to overcome pernicious indebtedness and providing timely assistance in inevitable expenditure related to births, deaths and marriages. (2) Cooperative Stores to mitigate inflation eroding real earnings. (3) Housing Societies to aid acquisition of shelter which is a particularly difficult proposition in metropolitan and high urban concentration areas. (4) Education Scholarships for higher education for those particularly outstanding and deserving. (5) Welfare Societies which represent a major thrust in recent years. These are funded by contributions from employees with matching contributions from the Company. The funds are managed by a Committee representing all sections of employees and are utilised in providing vocational guidance to children, cultural and industrial tours, monetary assistance to injured employees or the next-of-kin of those who unfortunately die, counselling and assistance in family planning and a host of other laudable measures.

The largeness and all-India nature of the Company provide nearly 30,000 people from different regions, social backgrounds, beliefs, religions

and castes an opportunity to work together towards a common Corporate goal, create a sense of belonging and a pride in Corporate citizenship befitting a large country with a multitude of diversities like ours. This is strengthened further by both stability and security in employment and earnings, it being a part of Company Policy to neither retrench nor lay off a single employee even in adversity. Perhaps even more important are the NON-MATERIAL dimensions. ITC believes that real participation should begin at grass-root level where the employee and his superior accept their respective roles and responsibilities and look upon work and life at work as a joint venture for the overall good of the organisation and its people.

Your Company believes that enduring success can only be assured in an Organisation with an open Management style where individuals are free to exchange views and criticism without fear of inhibition. In conformity with this belief your Company has launched an intensive programme of what is commonly known as "Organisation Development" in its largest Division — I.T.D. — with the help of external and internal Consultants who will bring to bear their knowledge of human behaviour to enhance Organisational effectiveness and excellence.

The major benefits can be summed up in two generic areas. Firstly, it helps individuals in the Organisation to identify their own place and role in both activities and results. Secondly, both the Organisation and the individual can look at their respective data and examine the nature and reality of their interdependence.

E NATION AND SOCIETY

The final part of the Social Audit relates to the Nation and Society.

1. THE COMPANY — SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES — CREATING AWARENESS

In the very first place ITC recognises that Management in particular, must be sensitive to accepting accountability in the discharge of social responsibilities. It further believes that such awareness derives from knowledge of socio-economic

circumstances rather than from organisational dictat.

2. THE COMPANY AND SPORT

I believe ITC can claim a premier position in support of Sports as essential to creating healthy minds on which depends the future of the country. On an all-India basis ITC's sponsorship of Cricket, Tennis and Golf is well-known. What is perhaps less known is the support provided regionally to football, hockey, badminton, table-tennis and such indoor games as Bridge.

3. THE COMPANY AND CULTURE

ITC has been keenly involved in the promotion of Indian Classical Music over many years. The ITC Sangeet Sammelan has become the premier Classical Music event in the Capital and is now supported by regional Music Meets. A great stride forward by ITC has been the creation of the ITC Sangeet Research Academy in Calcutta which is managed with the help of such eminent Trustees as Shri Satyajit Ray, Shri Ravi Shankar and Shri Arvind Parikh.

4 THE COMPANY AND RURAL WEAKER SECTIONS

ITC has sponsored Triveni Handlooms Ltd. with its Headquarters in Kanpur and a working station in Shahjahanpur. The purpose of this endeavour is to provide a link directly between the weavers and the marketplace, thus eliminating middlemen. Triveni Handlooms deals directly with weavers and its basic objectives are to provide inputs to weavers and then an outlet for the produce. The weavers are given designs, yarns, dyes, assistance for repair of looms, etc. in the first place. Thereafter, the offtake of the produce is guaranteed, and as they are unable to afford the final Finishing equipment this activity is arranged for the weavers. The initial work has started with 100 weavers and, as it succeeds and gains momentum, the concept will be continuously extended.

5 THE COMPANY AND ECOLOGY

ITC is concerned with Ecology and in March '75 brought out a booklet entitled "ENVIRONMENTAL

POLLUTION — CAUSES & METHODS OF CONTROL" to assist the creation of awareness in this vital area. Strict measures are adopted at all production plants to avoid pollution by any agents such as smoke. In the promotion of Bhadrachalam Paperboards particular care has been taken and investments made in excess of Rs 50 lakhs for the most effective and up-to-date effluent treatment unlike any other in India. In the development of Hotel designs special attention has been given to Ecology.

6 THE COMPANY AND INTEGRATION

Finally, ITC's integration with Society goes beyond statistics and shareholdings. It also embraces positive expression in Pride of Heritage and the unity of People in the midst of diversity. Only one example of the former is the new dimension that has been added to the Hotel Industry by developing concepts rooted in the soil of India. An example of our approach to the Unity of People is the concept of development of the housing colony in Bhadrachalam — unsegregated housing for different levels of responsibility on the one hand and a central plaza revolving around a place of worship for the different faiths of India.

F. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to re-affirm that in ITC there is continuing aspiration to meet ever more exacting and broadening standards of subserving the Nation. I submit that, in the interest of the economy such endeavour needs special encouragement to corporate entities like ITC which can stand the scrutiny of a Social Audit. Encouragement could be given by Government to such Organisations by loosening the constraints that fetter the operations and growth of large industrial houses for such Companies may truly be described as "The Professional National Sector" making a meaningful contribution to the furtherance of Public Good.

The above are extracts from the Chairman's Statement

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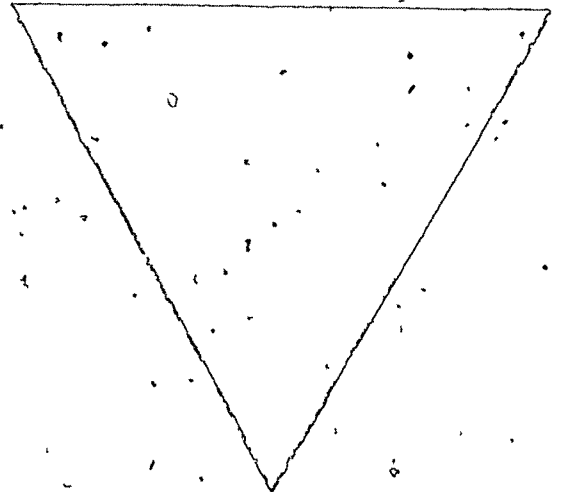
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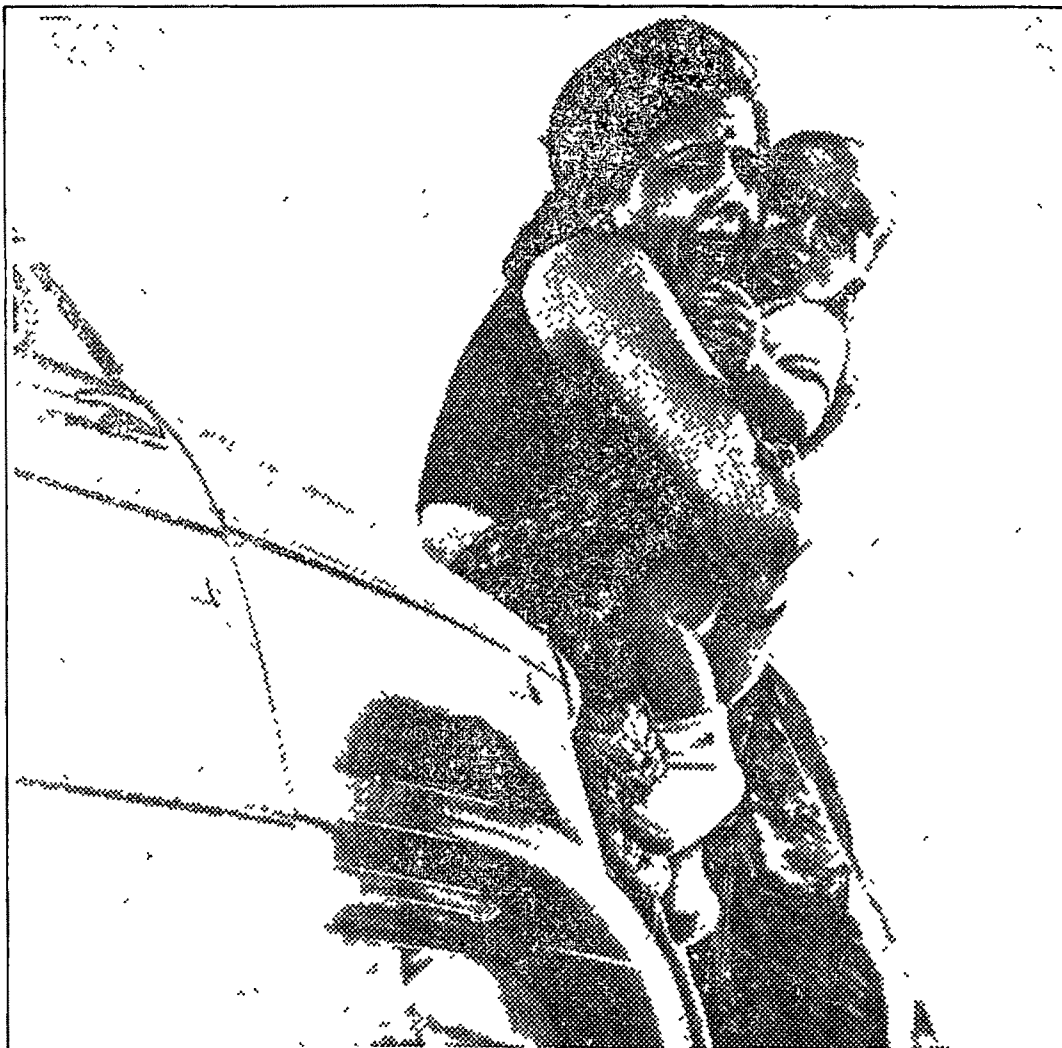


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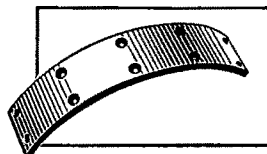


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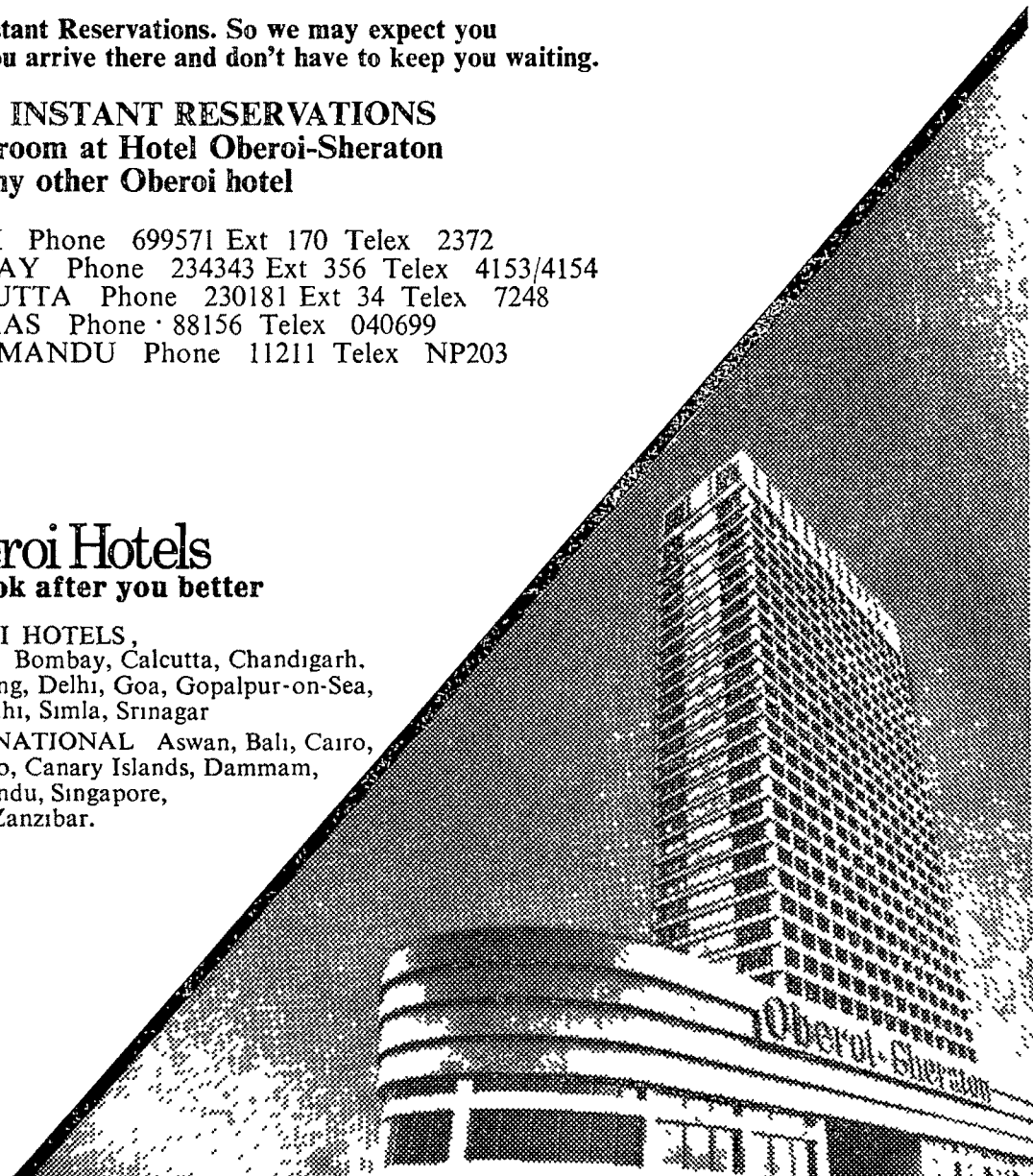
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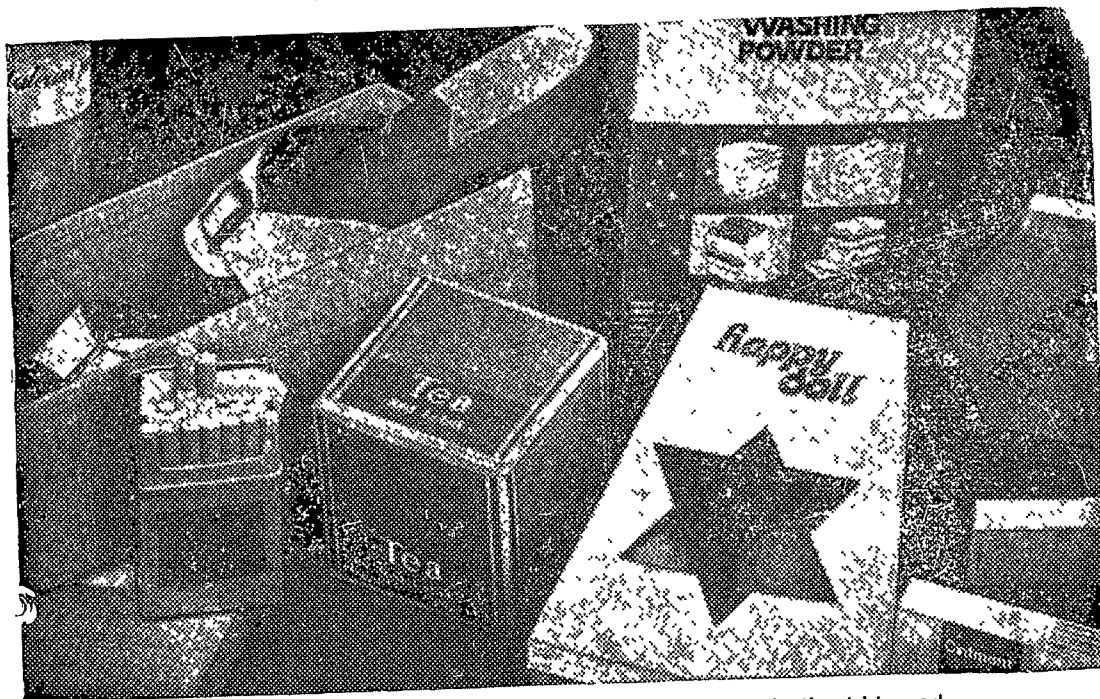
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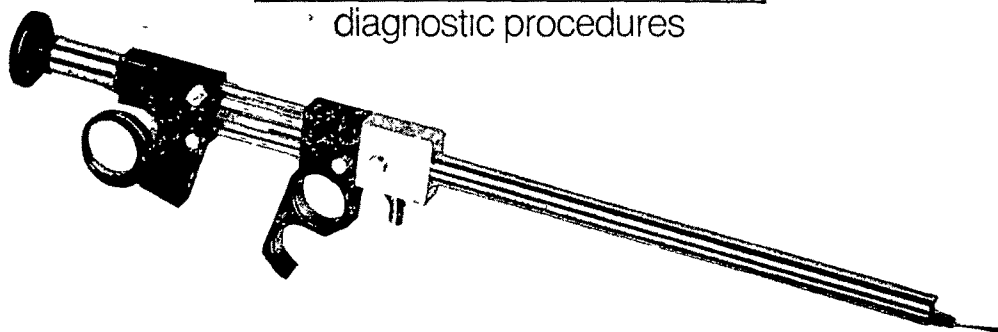
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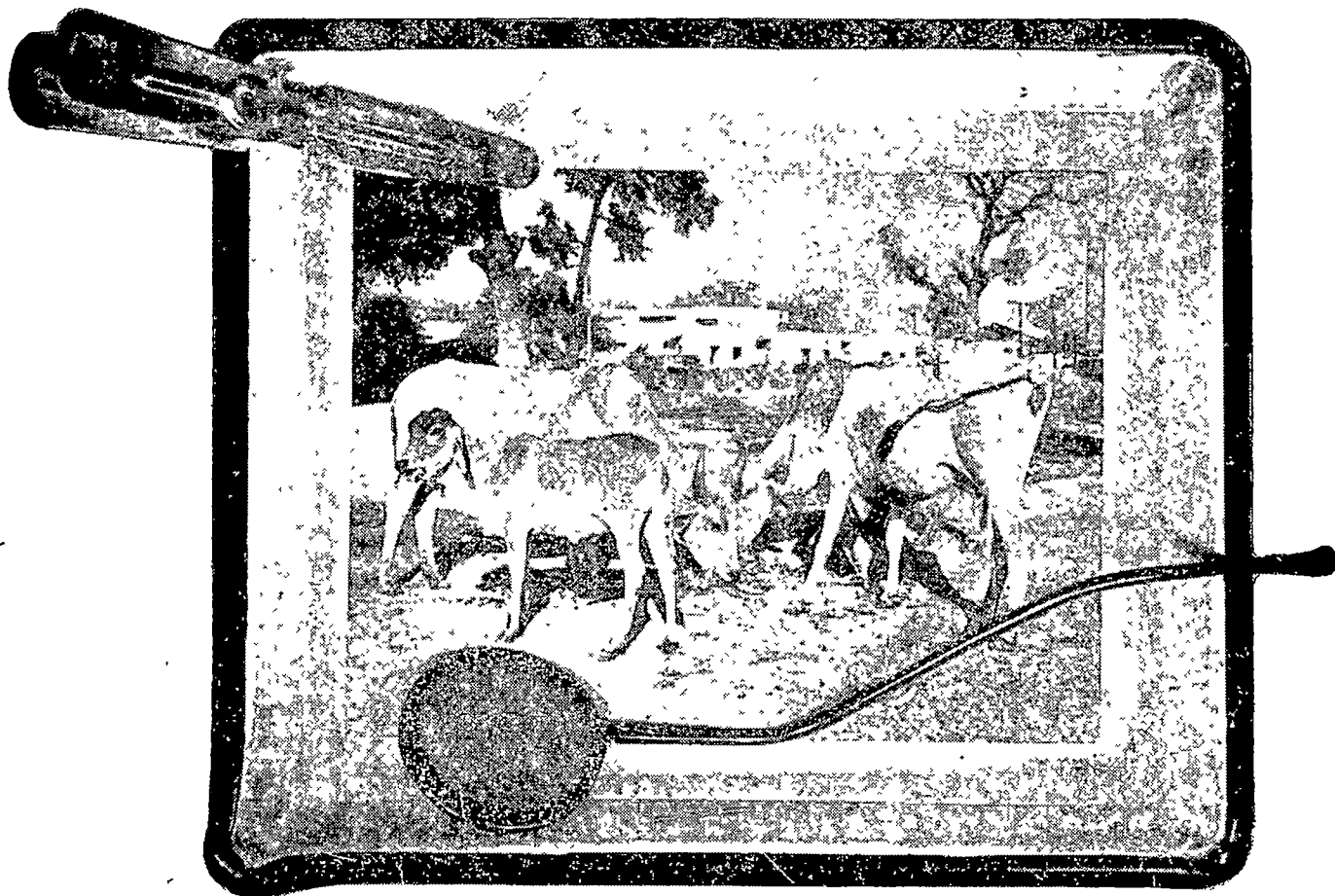
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We are trying our utmost, but it is not possible for the West Bengal Government alone to meet the crisis. We have requested the Centre for help. To rebuild thousands of villages, to feed millions of victims for months and to resettle them and for keeping up their morale, help and assistance from the entire nation should come forward.

I appeal to all, to the various Charitable Trusts, Organisations, Chambers of Commerce, manufacturers of drugs and other materials, business community and traders, workers' organisations, philanthropists, students and youth and to everyone to donate generously both in cash and kind in aid of the flood victims. **I am confident that the people of India will uphold their tradition and stretch their hands to help their brothers and sisters of West Bengal in their hour of distress.**

With the help and efforts of all, we shall overcome the crisis.

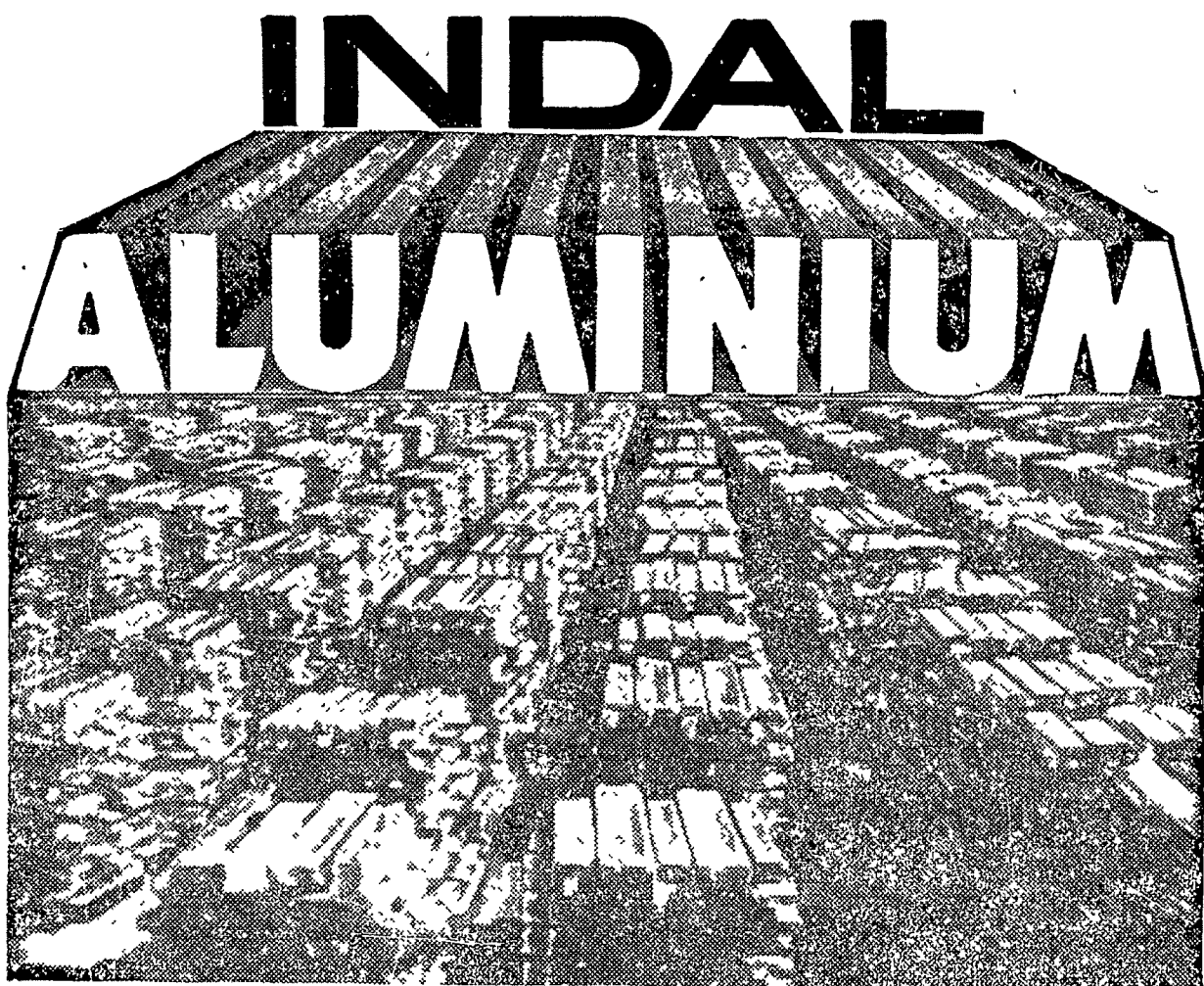
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(Jyoti Basu)

Chief Minister, West Bengal

October 14, 1978

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a symposium on the
problems facing the
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symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

Ram Chhabra, journalist and Project
Director, Communications, Family Planning
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THE EMERGENCY AND AFTER

V. A. Pai Panandiker, Director, Centre for
Policy Research, New Delhi

RESTRUCTURING THE SYSTEM

J. C. Kavoori, Executive Director,
Family Planning Foundation, Delhi

FAMILY PLANNING 1978

Banoo J. Coyaji, Director,
K. E. M. Hospital, Pune

CONTRACEPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

K. N. Sharma, Professor and Chairman,
Department of Physiology, University
College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

POLITICIAN'S ROLE

Ramlal Parikh, Member of
Parliament, Rajya Sabha

BOOKS

Reviewed by Rudolf Gyan de Mello and
Dipak Bhatia

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by the Family Planning Foundation

COVER Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

THE red triangle lies battered out of shape today — pummelled equally, if sequentially, by the forces of hyperaction and inaction. Once as ubiquitous as the mosquito has now become, the *lal trikon*, the symbol of family planning, has vanished from the Indian scene alongside the nomenclature from official parlance. Village walls across the country stand whitewashed into innocence of its knowledge, the vehicles and hoardings that once flaunted it like a proud badge are studiously keeping a low profile; the traumatised triangle seems to have become a Mongoloid child of politics, an embarrassment which in typical traditional style is being tucked out of sight.

Consequently, the efforts of over a quarter of a century stand in danger of being totally negated. That is, unless immediate steps are initiated to reverse the setbacks that have occurred in this work — earlier due to the excesses that took place in the implementation of the programme during the Emergency, later compounded by gross political capitalization of the issue, capped by inept handling by those placed at the helm of this work. Between Sanjay Gandhi and his militant henchmen and Raj Narain and his bumbling version of mythological heroes, the family planning programme has come to a virtual halt, a state that places the nation's future at stake.

Unfortunately, the gravity of the matter does not seem to have registered on the country's leaders. Or if it has, politically expedient considerations have succeeded in pushing it down the scale of values, even though the population time bomb ticks away mercilessly. What other explanation for the fact that the 'sterilization backlash' instead of being contained at the very outset by a firm commitment to the family planning programme was whipped to still greater fury by populist panderings in order to subserve political electoral interests in the States and is subsequently being left severely alone by the politically powerful, the Prime Minister excepted?

Last year's performance, which is now well known, is testimony to the near paralysis of the administrative set-up responsible for propagating family planning work. Despite the fact that about 90,000 persons are directly employed and that last year's budget was nearly 100 crores, this enormous infrastructure supported by the public did very little: its open plea is that widespread demoralization within its ranks in the wake of post-emergency investigations and the uncertainty of influential political attitudes has led to a shrinking of responsibility and apathy. This inertia may well be that of a mesmerised rabbit transfixed by the snake gaze of its past, but the toll it is taking of the present and the future has drawn surprisingly little comment, much less concern, in the country.

Last year (April 77-March 78) the sum total of work done in the family planning field, which now with the added ingredient of a stepped-up immunization and prophylaxis effort is euphemistically called family welfare, was 926,000 sterilizations, 316,000 IUD insertions and 3.1 million covered by the conventional contraceptives. The sterilization performance was not only the lowest achieved in the last decade, but in complete reversal of recent trends 85 per cent of the operations were tubectomies — which, besides other problems which we will deal with later, points to the fact that even this marginal performance was more the result of desperate women seeking a remedy, rather than enlightened workers projecting a solution.

The shortfall in sterilization may, however, still be explained away in terms of a backlash. But what is far more shattering and inexplicable is the fall in spheres other than terminal methods to which no odium was attached. Last year, sterilizations were given no 'expected levels of performance'. (Like the phrase 'family planning', 'target' was considered a dirty word in official Health Ministry language last year and bureaucrats, always adept at word-sleights, had a ready, if longwinded, substitute in 'expected levels of performance'.) However, IUD insertions

and conventional contraceptives were clearly handed performance goals. It is to be noted that IUDs met only a third of the performance level expected for the year and almost half of what had been achieved the previous year. Similarly the coverage by conventional contraceptives shortfalled by over 40 per cent from the delineated performance level. More alarmingly still, the absolute numbers reached were less by half a million than in the previous year. In other words, instead of winning new acceptors the machinery let people previously converted to family planning measures move away. A small but illuminating insight into official attitudes is provided by the fact that while commercial sales of condoms rose during this period, free distribution dropped.

Moreover, practically half of the '77-'78 figures came in the last trimester, after the Prime Minister had more than once mounted a personal appeal to State Chief Ministers to help revitalise the programme, and even so, more than three quarters of the year's new acceptors were provided by the six States south of the Vindhyas plus Gujarat. The populous northern States of UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana which have bred 42 per cent of the country's population chalked up less than 12 per cent of acceptors. Uttar Pradesh was particularly bad — with a sixth of India's population it produced a paltry 13,000 terminal acceptors, a mere 1260 men among them. Bihar with 10 per cent of the population provided only 39,000 sterilizations. But even the limited response to the Prime Minister's pleas and to the order relinking 8 per cent of Central aid to States on the score of their family welfare work, has tapered away.

The first trimester of this year has brought in results that are even lower than the same period last year when the excesses of the Emergency were oven-fresh in the minds of the people. Vasectomy — the easiest, most economical, most effective and least harmful method of birth control — has had a further erosion. Less than 20,000 men in the country agreed to adopt this method in these months, lowering their

number by 17 per cent from the same period last year. As a result today tubectomies account for nearly 90 per cent of sterilizations. In terms of sterilizations, no State in the country has even achieved 50 per cent of the figures it was expected to reach during this period, with the exception of five or six States, the rest have managed less than 25 per cent. For several States such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and even Kerala, the country's population control pace-setter so far — the performance is abysmally low for all techniques, including conventional contraceptives. The overall performance of the country is 60 per cent — taking into account all methods — of what was expected for the period.

What are the consequences of this non-performance by the administrative apparatus and non-cooperation by the people — apart from the colossal wastage of resources on an infrastructure the investment in which remains the same without any corresponding return benefit? There is some simple arithmetic of the national compulsions that every person should know, for the logic of this plus-minus exercise can only be ignored at tremendous peril.

Demographic literature has established that a rock bottom minimum of 1.5 million sterilizations need to be done each year to keep the birth rate static. This is because 2 million couples enter the reproductive age group every year, while 0.6 million leave it; the fertility rate of the 15-24 age group is 3 times that of the 40-44 age-group. Further, the birth rate per 1,000 is calculated on the number of couples in the reproductive age group, with our till recently pyramidal population structure, the number of births must inevitably increase as the base moves upwards. Thus, for the birth rate to come down, this substantial inbuilt increase has to be first neutralised.

The draft five-year plan for 1978-83 concedes: 'Earlier the changes in the age distribution of the population were favourable towards the reduction in the birth rate as the proportion of women of the

reproductive age group showed a decline during 1961-71. This trend is expected to be unfavourable as the proportion of reproductive women is likely to increase in subsequent years according to the projections of the Expert Committee on Population Projections. Thus, even if age specific fertility rates remain unchanged the birth rate may show a rising trend. This shows the need for a determined effort to push up the Family Welfare Programme in order to bring about even a moderate decrease in the birth rate.

With 1976-77's record 8 million plus sterilizations (leaving aside for the moment the emotive and ethical issues raised by the mishandling of the programme during the period) the birth rate came down to less than 33 per 1000. It was targeted to reach 30 per 1000 at the end of the fifth plan in 1978-79. The regression of 1977-78 resulted in the postponement of this target of 30 to 1982-83. This four year slippage from a goal that was in reachable sight has brought the country an extra burden of 10 million births, over and above the annual 13 million expansion that takes place. The drain on the country's material resources and abilities to meet even minimum needs for this number is one aspect. But a still larger issue, and a far more traumatic consequence than even the pressures created on limited means, is a hitherto ignored one: that these preventable births take a toll of human lives.

There can be no possible brief for what happened during the Emergency. The suspended salaries/promotions/licenses that made harassed individuals into touts and tyrants for the family planning cause is a despicable part of the past record. Further, the Shah Commission in its summary note on the Implementation of the Family Planning Programme during the Emergency has stated that it received in response to its questionnaires circulated to all States and union territories 527 complaints/reports of sterilization of unmarried persons and 1641 reports/complaints of deaths due to sterilization. While it has not furnished particulars of how many of these cases have been verified to be true, there is hardly any need to state than even a single case of coercion would be something that should be decried and it is an established fact that the Emergency saw more than just a few.

The couple of case studies that the Shah Commission brought forward as an illustration as, for instance, of the young man from Ambala who committed suicide in the end, will remain blots on the nation's conscience for all time. But that does not preclude raising the question as to how this can justify the ostrich-with-the-head-in-sand attitude that now prevails, which is inimical to precious women and children's lives? India's maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world — 573 per 100,000 live births. The ten million births that would have been avoided and will now take place will accordingly result in the death of 57,300 women. While we rightly deplore the excesses of the Emergency and the barbarity of forced sterilizations, how is it

that we remain insensitive to the excesses of inaction for which such an enormous number of women will pay with their lives, and the barbarity of 'forced pregnancies' that occur as women are denied access to information and services in an environment that has discounted family planning?

For every notch that the birth rate pushes into reverse gear (each point of the birth rate according to present population figures represents 6.4 lakh births) a little over 11,000 women will be sacrificed at the altar of fertility. The position today is not merely one of postponed targets of reduction, but one in which we have already begun to lose gained ground. The Sixth Plan chalks up an ambitious operational plan that slates 25 million sterilizations to be done in the next five years — a steady spiralling each year beginning with 4 million in the current year to 6 million by 1982-83 — projects taking the cumulative number of effectively protected couples in the reproductive age group from 25 per cent to 36 per cent in order to achieve the modest postponed target. But the actual outcome of recent months has been that the number of effectively protected couples in the reproductive age group has slipped several millions to 24 million or 22 per cent of the population in the reproductive age bracket.

At a time when we are entering an exponential period of growth and needing to run just to stand still, even a short span of a climb back can spell irretrievable disaster, hurtling us into an abyss from which it might be difficult to pull out. As *People*, the International Planned Parenthood Federation's publication has projected in a table based on Indian government estimates in a recent issue devoted to the family planning situation in India, that without family planning efforts in the next couple of years, India's birth rate will be 41.4 per 1000 in 1982-83. That will be a full circle back to where we were in 1952 when family planning first seized governmental attention as a national imperative, but this time with almost a second India on our hands.

The statistical profile is chilling enough. There is no need to re-run the rhetoric on the inadequacy of planned development to keep pace with the human explosion of needs. Even the most cursory look around registers the fact of social, economic and developmental progress since Independence being nullified by the rapid population increase. No doubt there is a fashionable ideology now gathering currency among certain intellectuals that the population problem is not a pivotal but a secondary affair to poverty elimination, that tackling the latter will automatically bring about the desired structural changes in population as happened in the developed world. The theory clearly overlooks the historical reality that, in those areas the industrial revolution preceded, not followed, the population blow-up and that for us poised on a geometrical progression of growth, the time lag needed for this cause-and-effect relationship to establish itself is just not available. But the thrust of these economic arguments, counter arguments aside, it is time we turned our

attention to the far more critical issue as to how long more a society that has the pretensions of being democratic and civilised can remain ambivalent on a matter that is, as already pointed out, decimating a section of the population. Family planning must begin to be understood and rehabilitated in the perspective of a human rights movement that seeks to bring the scope of survival and the dignity of living to the condition of India's women and children.

The complacency that has dogged the family planning movement from its inception and particularly the ease and promptness with which the wave of discreditation has swelled is in no small measure a reflection of the poor status of the mass of Indian women as the Indian Council of Social Science Research in its document, 'Critical Issues on the Status of Women', has pointed out, 'Unless the economic and social utility of women is enhanced in the eyes of their families and the nation by opportunities to take part in socially and economically productive roles the rational neglect of women will continue. Erosion of productive roles emphasises women's position primarily as consumers and bearers of children making their lives cheap and easily expendable through increasing malnutrition and mortality'. Not only is childbirth a major killer of women but the endless cycle of pregnancies depletes their health, making women still in the prime of life exhausted physical wrecks. But like beasts of burden flogged to breaking point they must continue the relentless cycle in an attempt to produce a son or two who will survive before the compulsions of society unbend to allow them a reprieve. In the circumstances, women have been converted into a means of production of the only capital the poverty stricken think they can accumulate: sons who will supplement the household earnings and provide security in old age. It is the same rationale of reasoning that discounts the daughter who is only a liability, the *paraya dhan* that will augment another household.

Within the matrix of these traditional attitudes family planning has made headway only after the number of children born has reached a point that creates a visible economic drag on the family unit, a point that comes *long after* the woman herself has been reduced to a skeleton by repeated pregnancies plus the lactation periods which continue till the next child is on the way. The seemingly endearing epithet of *gai* (cow) used for a good woman in traditional vocabulary has a literal basis. Like a milch animal the Indian woman silently bears and suckles an endless succession of children. With neo-natal mortality accounting for half the infant mortality and further a substantial number of child deaths taking place before the age of 3 — till when the rural child largely subsists on the mother's milk, there is little economic investment from the family and thus hardly any loss of visible resources, the woman's emotional and physical contribution mattering little. This is surely a major cause for family planning remaining at low priority in the felt needs of the community: the fact that both children and their producers, the mothers,

can be replaced without loss, the women only too often with a little profit to the husband.

Against this backdrop of social values, the coercion incidents followed by their intense politicisation has provided a convenient escapist formula to a patriarchal system that was earlier even before the Emergency only reluctantly and slowly yielding to the pressures of a concept, the value of which it could only dimly perceive. With men voicing and determining the lead, women even though hurt by the fall off in the pressures towards birth control measures, and in many cases aware of the remedy, are finding themselves unable to openly articulate their need without overt support from known power structures.

Two types of dangers exist today: a continuing apathy on the entire issue but, more likely, a tendency to seek a soft option which directs the programme only to those that it finds receptive, i.e., predominantly women, a path fraught with equally grave consequences. The Janata population policy — which is really no different from the earlier population policy except for the stress on the voluntary implementation of the programme — was at the time of announcement, much vaunted as being conducted in the context of women's rights. But, in the event, not only has the absence of any meaningful level of work caused a further direct blow to the Indian women's health profile which is already a matter of grave concern in view of the higher mortality and morbidity in this sex leading to a steady dwindling of its numbers — but the exclusive thrust of family planning measures in the direction of women will take a nasty toll that is not yet being realised.

Today a situation is being allowed to develop in which the woman's biology alone is bearing the brunt either way — pregnancy or the control of it, even though the risk attendant on the man sharing responsibility in reproductive behaviour is so minimal as to be non-existent. A woman undergoing a tubectomy runs a mortality risk of 1 in 4000 which compared to the 1 in 240 risk of pregnancy, apart from the health depletion and its complications, makes it seem like a free lottery ticket. But this does not take away from the reality that a tubectomy, no matter what the technique employed, remains a hospital procedure, one that requires facilities of a type that are not widely available, also much more after care. The two other successful methods of modern contraception, the IUD and the oral pill, though excellent for limited use, undeniably have their own hazards. The side effects of the IUD are particularly pernicious for the average Indian woman who tends to be chronically anaemic, while the pill carries a definite mortality risk, particularly for women past the thirties when the risk factor is as much as 3.4 per 100,000 users.

The more mechanical methods of contraception carry varying but fairly high rates of failure which continually expose women to the stress and strain of unwanted pregnancy. By contrast vasectomy is an OPD procedure that in scientific conditions has a mortality risk of only 1 per 100,000. (India's experience

of higher mortality is the outcome of lack of hygiene and proper care in mass camps and not an intrinsic vulnerability of the method.) To encourage or even allow men to wallow in their psychological trauma ignoring the very real physical dangers to their female counterparts could not be more counter-productive to the nation's interest in the long run. The equal rights of all sections of the population apart, there will be logistical problems in the delivery of contraceptives that demand constant, consistent motivation and supervision and female sterilizations would soon reach the ceiling, because neither the personnel nor facilities are available to conduct them on the scale needed to meet sterilization goals exclusively through tubectomies. The vasectomy barrier will have to be pulled down eventually, but should that happen only after endless suffering and chaos has been created?

The National Plan of Action for the observance of the Year of the Child which lies just ahead lists the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates by 5 per cent as one of its prime objectives. In earlier planning exercises this goal was actually 10 per cent and was trimmed to half to make it a more realistic expectation. As a matter of fact, merely the earnest implementation of the family planning programme, simply to achieve the modest postponed goals the draft plan for 1978-83 has set up, would effect in absolute numbers the equivalent of a 10 per cent reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates. The 3 point reduction in birth rate would have to avert another 2 million births and this would save 2.5 lakh infants from the fate of being born just to die in days and 114,000 women from a rendezvous with death in childbirth.

India's theme for IYC is Reaching the Deprived Child. This should provide the context in which family planning ought to be rehabilitated as a humane need. For effective fertility control that prevents excessive births and minimises the psychology of fatalistic expendability that governs our attitudes to infants is surely a prerequisite for the breaking of this cycle of deprivation and human wastage. Can anyone argue against the need to contain numbers if the deprived child is to be actually reached with what should be its birth rights of health care, education, personality development and eventually economic opportunities, but still more critically the right of survival? IYC provides the opportunity to highlight this, that the actual victims of the population increase are the children that are born and not wanted, that an unbridled population expansion causes child life to be devalued which in turn has a profound effect upon priorities with regard to child services, for child welfare can only become a meaningful concept when child life is not held cheap in the social scheme.

The IYC plan of action specifically identifies malnutrition as the single biggest contributor to child morbidity and mortality, particularly for children under the age of 5 who account for half the deaths in the country. But the document fails to go further

back and probe the root cause of infant and child malnutrition which, as has been adequately researched, is more often than not the consequence of maternal malnutrition and ill health on the one hand and the incidence of large families sharing a limited cake on the other.

It is an accepted fact that both the child in the womb and the child at the breast are influenced by the nutrition level of the mother. The abnormally high number of low birth-weight and therefore high risk of babies born in the country (as many as 25-30 per cent of babies weigh less than 2500 grammes, according to leading paediatrician Dr. Shanti Ghosh writing on the Feeding and Care of Infants) can be traced in very substantial part to causes that lie in the nutritional, age and parity status of the women, plus the lack of ante-natal care and the incidence of closely spaced births. We know that low birth-weight along with infections — which strike the malnourished child more easily and frequently — is a major cause of neo-natal mortality. Also, it is estimated that one third of infant deaths due to premature birth are directly caused by maternal malnutrition.

There are 48 million children living below the poverty line. In an overwhelming number they are part of large family structures where every additional mouth worsens the nutritional status of the younger children. The First Asian Congress of Nutrition highlighted in a study that undernutrition is much less in the first three children of a family than in those occupying positions further down the line. The percentage of nutritional deficiency signs in children have been shown to increase and the dietetic intake to decrease by 300 calories and 10 grammes of protein per adult consumption unit in families with 4 or more children as compared to one to three — because the brunt of scarcity inevitably falls with greater force on the women and smaller children of a poor family. Close spacing of children, which means repeated pregnancies for the mother accentuate her malnutrition, predisposing her to low birth weight which in turn makes the infant more susceptible to life threatening hazards. The seriousness of the government effort to make a vital social dent on behalf of children must therefore be preceded by its performance in family planning work.

Mere letters and appeals are not going to put the family planning programme back on the rails. It needs a strong political muscle that makes no bones about having fears or reservations on the population issue. This should include the will to take even unpalatable decisions that put the programme into a legal framework of compulsion if it will not move any other way.

If the politicians of today, seeing the stark writing on the wall staring them and the nation in the face, still do not change their stance there can only be one inference for this group too, it is a *kissa karsi ka*. The people do not figure.

RAMI CHHABRA

Emergency and after

V. A. PAI PANANDIKER

INDIA was one of the first countries in the world to make family planning an integral part of the development plans. Since the very beginning of the planning era in the country in 1951, family planning was given an important place. The programme, however, did not make much impact on the growth rate of population during the first and the second plan periods (1951-61). Witness the fact that the number of family planning clinics set up in the first plan period in the whole country was as low as 147, only another 1649 were added in the second. This is further corroborated by an expenditure of only Rs 1.5 million on the programme in the first plan and of Rs 21.6 million in the second. The population increased from 361 million in 1951 to 439 in 1961 registering a growth rate of 21.6 per cent during the decade as against 13.3 per cent in the previous decade (1941-51).

Realising the inadequacy of the effort, there was a shift in emphasis on family planning from a low priority programme in the first two plans to a high priority one in the third plan. The outlay was increased to Rs 270 million and the number of family planning clinics raised to over 5,000. Several other measures were taken to expand and strengthen the programme, such as launching of a programme of demographic and bio-medical research, training of medical and para-medical personnel in family planning, integration of family planning with the normal medical and health services, etc. The major thrust of the third five-year plan was on creating the necessary infrastructure for family planning and, naturally, it took the new measures some time to show results. It was only by 1968-69 that the first signs of a decline in the birth-rate

appeared on the horizon. The birth-rate which was reckoned at 41 per thousand of population since 1961 declined by 2 points and stood at 39 that year.

With the progress of the programme, a change was effected in the strategy of its implementation. In the first two plan periods the programme was largely clinic-based, i.e., whatever family planning services were offered by a clinic were open to a citizen to avail of. There was little or no effort to educate the people about the programme. The extension work was negligible. During the third plan period and part of the annual plans which followed it, the programme was administered mainly through what has come to be known as the cafeteria system. According to this system a number of family planning methods were simultaneously propagated and offered and a citizen could pick and choose any method of his choice. Extension services were established to educate and motivate people. A small amount of monetary incentive was also introduced to attract people to sterilization.

Encouraged by the reduction in the birth-rate in 1968-69, which occurred for the first time in the long struggle since 1951-52, the fourth five-year plan opened on a hopeful note and fixed a target of further reducing the birth-rate to 32 per thousand by 1973-74. By now the programme administrators had learnt through experience that whereas other methods of family planning were of doubtful effectiveness in terms of their adoption by the people, sterilization was specific, sure and a once and for all method and therefore could be depended upon for substantive achievement. Consequently, a high reliance was placed on

sterilization for achieving the target set forth in the fourth five-year plan. A new strategy employed for sterilizing a large number of people was the camp approach. The entire administrative machinery of a district or *taluka* (sub-division) was mobilized to hold sterilization camps at different places during a year to which a large number of people were brought from surrounding areas and sterilized on the spot. By way of compensation, they were given attractive gifts ranging from plastic buckets to transistor radios.

This approach seems to have produced good results and in 1972-73 over 3 million people were sterilized. The strategy, however, received a severe setback owing to the occurrence of a number of mishaps in the various camps, including some deaths. Consequently, the number fell sharply and only 0.9 million sterilizations were done in 1973-74 as against 3.1 million in the previous year. By the end of the fourth five-year plan in March 1974, the birth-rate was reckoned to have declined to 35 per thousand of population but the target set at 32 per thousand was still quite far away.

The fifth five-year plan planned a reduction in the birth-rate to 30 by 1978-79. Like the fourth five-year plan it placed a heavy reliance on sterilization and set a target of 18 million sterilizations for the plan period. The strategy of camps came in handy again. After a temporary setback for a couple of years when it operated in a low key, the strategy was received vigorously from 1975-76.

The declaration of the Emergency in June 1975 brought the family planning programme in the forefront of Indian politics even though it was not part of the 20-Point Programme. The subtle coercion used earlier for sterilization was now exercised openly. Perhaps the turning point in the programme was the declaration of the 4-point Programme of Sanjay Gandhi later in 1975 in which family planning figured prominently. Why Sanjay Gandhi picked up the reproduction arena for special action is a matter for study itself. As a result of these events, there was a massive increase in sterilizations 2.7

million operations were performed in that year (1975-76) as against 1.35 million in the previous year and only 0.9 million in the year before that. In other words, twice as many sterilization operations were performed in 1975-76 as in 1974-75 and thrice as many as in 1973-74.

While no formal, official cognizance was taken of the 4-Point Programme of Sanjay Gandhi, there was no doubt, as the events unfolded themselves, that it had a direct bearing on the policies of many States. The New Population Policy of the Government of India announced in April 1976 was a more cautious document. Its emphasis was on incentives and disincentives with option for compulsory sterilizations given to the State governments.

In the wake of the 1976 population policy, the then Prime Minister addressed a personal letter to all the Chief Ministers to accord a very high priority to family planning and make an all-out effort to realize the targets set forth for the year. The Members of Parliament were advised to tour their constituencies and exhort the people to adopt family planning. A full-scale propaganda campaign was launched in support of bringing down the birth rate as quickly as possible. The top leadership of the ruling party, both in the government and outside, extended its full support to the new population policy as well as to the specific programme set forth for the year 1976-77 in the light of this policy.

It was against this background that the States, being the implementing agency, received political directives from Delhi to launch a massive campaign for sterilization. In the then prevailing state of emergency in the country, this was generally taken as a mandate by the States. These instructions were taken in the same light and as if to prove their credentials to the Emergency rulers, the States mounted a massive effort to sterilize as large a number of people as possible. The States which were labelled backward in family planning on the basis of their past performance made all the more vigorous efforts in order to wipe out the stigma attached to them. They allowed a free hand to their administrations

to mop up as large a number of people as possible and sterilize them. Departments such as Education or Police which had little to do with family planning were mobilized with all their might. This is how States like U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Bihar not only fulfilled the targets allotted to them but exceeded them in less than six months of the year (1976-77). Chief Ministers vied with each other in effecting as large a number of sterilizations as possible.

The Centre had fixed a target of 4.3 million sterilizations for 1976-77. The achievement was 8.23 million, almost double the target. This was done by organising a large number of sterilization camps all over the country and pressing into service the field staff of various government departments and semi-government organisations for bringing people to the camps under the quota system. Every field worker was allotted a quota for procuring a specific number of persons for sterilization within the stipulated time, failing which he was liable to disciplinary action ranging from warning and an adverse entry in his Character Roll to termination of service. On pain of such penalties, every public servant who was allotted an individual target used all possible means to fulfil his quota.

Coercion of various kinds and even outright compulsion thus became rampant in the campaign for mobilising people for sterilization. Some of the more common coercive methods used were issuing a threat of prosecution to shopkeepers for the imaginary contravention of some civic bye-laws, causing deliberate delay in the sanction of loans or grant of subsidy to cultivators, difficulty in the allotment of house-sites or surplus lands to landless agricultural labourers, refusing to renew or grant licences of various kinds and even denying such time-honoured and routine facilities as free medical treatment at government hospitals and dispensaries to dissenting people. An outright compulsion was exercised in such a blatant manner as seizing people from cinema houses, bus stops, railway stations and other public places and whisking them to camps for spot sterilization without bothering in the least whether they

were married or unmarried, old or young, with children or issueless and even whether they were in good enough health to stand an operation

The use of such methods of compulsion and coercion ultimately brought its nemesis. So intense was the resentment among the people at many places that they resorted to violent defiance of authority, leading to firings, lathi-charges and arrests. Nagina, Pipli, Uttawar, Muzaffarnagar, Sultanpur and several other places are standing monuments to the popular mood. The political climax was provided by the 1977 Lok Sabha elections.

It will not be out of place to mention in this context what the final report of the Shah Commission has to say about family planning. The report states that till October 1975, the government had always stressed the voluntary nature of the programme, but some time later the then Health Minister sent a note to the Prime Minister on the crash programme to implement family planning by a judicious combination of incentives and disincentives. This was the first visible sign of change showing a leaning towards force. On January 10, 1976, Dr Karan Singh told the Consultative Committee of M Ps attached to his Ministry that it was necessary to introduce some sort of compulsion in the implementation of the programme. A few days later Indira Gandhi told another conference, 'We must now act decisively. We should not hesitate to take steps which might be described as drastic'.

It is now quite apparent that the implications of the population policy adopted in April 1976, was highly disastrous to its objectives. Instead of supporting the reasonable popular response to the family planning programme which had been building up over the years, the new scheme led to profound hostility both from the citizens and the civil service engaged in the implementation of the programme. The matter was made highly complicated by the provision in the new policy of the scheme for compulsory sterilization to be implemented at the option of the State governments. In the process of implementation, this option virtually

became the population policy in many States, particularly in northern India, which took to it with a vengeance ultimately resulting in the total collapse of the policy.

The compulsory sterilization was an act of both political and programmatic lunacy. Three cheers for the political lunacy as it played such an important role in the Lok Sabha elections in March 1977. Not a single cheer for the programme which now has neither political backing nor popular support.

With the change of government at the Centre in March 1977, the entire population policy of April 1976 was dropped. Even the name of the family planning programme (and even of the Department) was changed to that of family welfare. A new population policy was announced in April 1977, completely eschewing the use of compulsion, coercion or pressure of any sort and restoring to the programme the character of a voluntary approach. The new policy states that the government attaches the highest importance to the dignity of the citizen and his right to determine the size of his family. Compulsion of any kind in the area of family welfare has been ruled out. The approach will be educational and wholly voluntary. The government will promote all methods with equal emphasis and it will be left to every family to decide what method of contraception it would like to adopt. It further states that the government is totally against any legislation for compulsory sterilization either at the Central level or the States.

While the ideals of the new policy are no doubt noble and unexceptionable, it is in the field of implementation of the programme that there has been a precipitate fall since the new government took over the reins of office at the Centre in March 1977. 1977-78 was a bad year for the programme inasmuch as the performance in terms of acceptance of various contraceptive methods was very low. The number of sterilizations fell to as low a level as 0.9 million as against 8.2 million in 1976-77. What is even worse, there was a sharp decline in the number of IUD insertions (60%) and a fall even in the number of users of con-

ventional contraceptives (18%) compared to the corresponding period of the two years. There have also been cases where people coming forward willingly and voluntarily for sterilization were turned back by the staff of the family welfare centres for fear of being accused of using coercive methods.

There are three main reasons for a decline in the programme. One is a lack of political will, especially at the State level, to pursue the programme vigorously. The second is the considerable demoralization of public servants implementing the programme. Thirdly, to top it all, is the shattering of the people's confidence both in the programme and the administration caused by the excesses of the Emergency.

Does this mean we are going to see an uncontrolled growth of population? Not necessarily. The collapse of the official family planning programme is not the same thing as the practice of family planning by the people. In many parts of the country where social services, especially education and health services are highly developed and used, the practice of family planning by the people will continue. Kerala had no compulsory sterilizations during the Emergency. Yet its birth rate is already well below 30 per thousand. There are rural districts of Kerala where the birth rate has already dropped to 20 per thousand. The situation is analogous, though not to the same extent, in Karnataka, Maharashtra, etc. Family planning will continue to succeed in these States regardless of the official programme.

The situation is entirely different in UP, Bihar etc., where the birth rate is way above the national average. It is here that we need more than a family planning or welfare programme. We almost need a social revolution especially a literacy drive, health care, and women's emancipation. Though the new five year plans stress again on sterilization, though not compulsory, far greater zeal is necessary for social change especially in the Hindi belt than a narrow governmental programme of family welfare. Therein may lie the answer to effective population control in the coming years.

Restructuring the system

J C KAVOORI

THE past one and a half years have been, for all those concerned with the problem of runaway population growth, a period of deep anguish and frustration. The abysmally low programme performance in family planning in the current year, coupled with the complete political indifference and nonchalance has aggravated a problem which at no time was easy to solve.

It is not enough that we trace the current stalemate in family planning to the 'insane excesses' of the Emergency and the consequent political backlash during and after the Emergency. This is the standard refrain of those concerned with the problem of population in explaining the fact of family planning being in the doldrums today. It is necessary that the crisis be understood in its deeper dimension. What has happened is not just a 'serious set-back' to the family planning programme but a *profound and disturbing change in the nature of the family planning problem itself*, the solutions for which need to be found with all expedition, imagination and radical rethinking.

Prior to the Emergency, resistance to family planning was largely of an individual character based on the

psychology of a people still rooted in tradition and general backwardness. During the Emergency, resistance to family planning not only became organized but also politicized, thus adding to an already difficult problem, a complex and unfamiliar dimension. Opposition to family planning was no longer based on caution and fear in the face of directed change, but on a sense of justification and righteousness of a wronged people. It is the surfacing of this new development that has altered the basic nature of the problem. This is particularly so in north India, thanks to the many unworthy things that happened *vis a vis* family planning during the Emergency. Family planning, a desperately needed programme, thus became a visible symbol of political tyranny. Nothing could have been more tragic for a country already burdened with its extra millions. It is an irony of fate that with liberation from authoritarian rule this country was confronted with the problem of family planning in its most difficult form.

Eighteen months after the Emergency, the effects of this unfortunate period remain with us in complex and difficult forms. (Some fluidity is evident in recent months, but the

stalemate essentially remains the same) The present state of affairs, therefore, is both a burden and a challenge

The critical problem today is to unfreeze the current situation with all expedition. In doing so, it is necessary to recognize the fact that the nature of the problem has changed in a basic and complex way (as has been already stated) and the methods, approaches and strategies (and the system which has given birth to them) need to be examined candidly for their relevance and usefulness. This is going to be a difficult process, for behind the methods, approaches and strategies are delicate sensitivities and even organized vested interests which cannot be wished away and, more importantly, the system itself on the whole is resistant to change.

In this paper an attempt will be made first of all to briefly review the history of family planning and identify its programme stance. This will be done with a view to finding out the limitations of the family planning programme as part of the system it belongs to. Based on this, some suggestions will be made to restructure the family planning programme. The focus is on process and programme, not on demographic projections and the like, although they are implicit in the whole paper.

In 1952, the Government of India officially took up family planning as part of an attempt to reduce fertility levels. Earlier there were several programmes for family planning, mostly clinics in urban centres, organized by private individuals and organizations, notably the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI). The basic motivation for their activities come from ideas of social welfare and humanitarianism. Family planning effort as an active and conscious instrument of controlling population growth, although not absent, was neither strong nor was it well articulated. People involved in family planning during this period were moved by compassion and will to serve their fellow men. They were reasonably effective in places where they worked. They

played the role of pioneers and legitimizers of a new programme and ideas in a traditional society. They had no sense of perspective in their work. They were not consciously building models for emulation, although some of the experiences of the earlier days are still relevant. Strangely enough, the humanitarian aspects of their work and experience did not get integrated into the much bigger national programme.

The official programme for family planning began in 1952 with clinics being started in various parts of India. The approach, basically, was clinical. In the third five-year plan an extension approach was introduced as part of an effort to make family planning more effective. The focus in this approach was twofold: (i) to create a group norm for a small family through educating the community and the leaders, and (ii) providing information and advice to couples in the reproductive age through the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM's) and Family Planning Health Assistants (FPHA's). These are the peripheral workers in the health care system in the lower rungs of the hierarchy and among the lowest paid. Between 1966-1969 (the inter-plan period) integration of family planning with Maternity & Child Health (MCH) was brought about.

The 'cafeteria approach' was also introduced with the idea that those who needed family planning could choose one of the several methods available. But this was not really so. As it turned out, it was really an euphemism for sterilization. Then came the period of incentives and disincentives, the marketing approach, and time bound programmes with regard to targets, etc.

The Plan outlays for the programme have increased, first steadily then sharply. The performance in family planning rose impressively in sheer physical terms.

From 1975 onwards, however, a more developmentally-oriented programme and policy articulation began to take place. Dr Karan Singh's policy and that of the Janata Government differ only in one major

respect. The latter is opposed to compulsion in any form for all time to come and makes family planning entirely voluntary. The former spoke of a 'direct assault' on family planning and did not wait for education and economic development to bring down fertility levels. He saw obviously the need for solving the problem in more radical ways.

Both the policy announcements have common elements in them, like raising the educational level of women, raising the age of marriage, galvanising voluntary effort particularly of youth and women, introducing population education for school youth and out of school youth, involving mass media more purposefully, supporting relevant bio-medical research and linking the percentage of Central assistance to the State plans with preference in family planning.

In broad historical terms, the contours of programme and policy seem not only forward-looking but also as if they could deliver the goods. But the fact of the matter is that the country has not even achieved the moderate population goals that it had set for itself. At least on two occasions we have revised our targets — (i) the earlier demographic target of Crude Birth Rate (CBR) of 25 per thousand by 1975-76 was revised in 1978 to a new target of achieving the birth rate of 23 per thousand by 1978-79, (ii) a decision was taken this year to revise the target of 30 per thousand in 1978-79 to be achieved in 1982-83.

With the history of family planning sketched above it may be worthwhile to look at the processional context in which the programme has been operationalized. Some of the basic realities are really identifiable for their value in redesigning the programme.

(i) The programme has been a centrally directed one with no room for flexibility and independence that can provide conditions for innovation, creativity and, more importantly, commitment. Being a programme entirely financed by the Central government, the State governments, barring a few exceptions, have shown lukewarm interest and

involvement in its success or even for the programme for that matter.

(ii) A developmental bias in family planning is of recent origin. Even this is not based on active developmental thinking at both planning and programme levels. The developmental rhetoric has, however, caught on! The involvement and concern of other ministries, particularly of those directly involved in development, has been largely non-existent although lately a few ministries have shown some interest. While this is welcome, it is not yet of consequence, for the heart of these ministries is not in the population problem. The few activities so far evident are confined to conferences and workshops. The perception of the population problem in these ministries is nearly the same as that of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Their own kind of perception that could have relevance to development, has yet to emerge.

(iii) The family planning problem is being solved by and large in and through the health care system. No serious question has been raised as to whether the system is capable of solving the problem partially or wholly or what the limits are to its capability. The system is assumed to be useful and relevant and is expected to subserve the family planning cause, just as it is expected to serve health as a whole. The Srivastava Committee has serious reservations about its role in health, let alone family planning, unless there is a radical restructuring of its approach and system. The report is eloquent and pertinent on the irrelevance of a high technology oriented medical and health system which dominates the national scene today. The health care system in the country, as elsewhere, is essentially a disease-tackling system. Family planning unfortunately has gotten enmeshed into this system. The couples (usually normal) seeking family planning advice are identified as 'patients' and those sterilized as 'vasectomy and tubectomy cases'. The 'sickness syndrome' of the system has affected to a considerable extent the efforts for family planning.

(iv) Thanks to the hegemonical position of the demographers in the

programme for the country, there has been an inordinately high tendency to look at family planning more as a macro phenomenon to the near exclusion of the micro level realities. In a centrally led programme, basic data at the macro level would be necessary and useful but this has (unintentionally) de-emphasised the importance of understanding the ways of tackling family planning imaginatively at the lower levels.

(v) While over the years new methods and approaches have been introduced and used, adequate testing or experimenting with them has not taken place. Their suitability or reliability or even the readiness of the people has not been adequately tested. The IUD was introduced in a hurry and withdrawn in the same way. Pills have been suspect for a long time and the clearance for use has come forth rather tardily. Even regarding sterilization, problems of tackling complications are not taken up earnestly. The performance and increase in millions in sterilization has been so impressive and persuasive in the eyes of the policy makers and programmers that it has excluded from their mind the promise other methods of family planning hold.

(vi) The overall history of family planning also shows that too much faith has been placed in the self-sufficiency of techniques at the cost of people and community, forgetting that in any worthwhile directed change, people matter. In the ultimate analysis people are more important and so are their sensitivities, therefore techniques should be adopted to suit them. Even in the extension education approach, which did produce some results, there has been a tendency to see the goodness or virtue of an idea or method or process without realising that the people's opinions really matter. Although the aim of the extension education was to create a small family size norm through group processes, it has not taken place to the extent it was expected. (Meaningful group processes at social action level should be 'bottom-up' not the other way round. Extension education has been effective where the workers have transcended the system and used the 'bottom-up' methods and processes). The method and technology have

dominated the people and the community. The excesses during the Emergency created intense human problems which the system could not cope with. Its effect continues to be felt in open and dormant forms even after all these months.

An attempt has been made above to identify factual realities and processes that go to make the basic stance of family planning, particularly its limitations and inadequacies. These limitations have a bearing on excesses that occurred during the Emergency. In fact, one could say that there is an internal linkage. To be more explicit, a centrally directed programme, with a weak educational and motivational content, an almost chronic dependence on the method (sterilization) and with an easily identifiable target group of the system (in this case, health) and more importantly with people at no time sufficiently involved in the programme, it was possible to manipulate the system by an individual hell-bent on succeeding in family planning by any means. A diversified approach with strategic importance being given to all important methods, a sound educational base, with an active involvement of the people at the grass-roots, would have made it impossible for any one to take liberties with the programme or policy. But this was unfortunately not the case.

It is important that this point is made. We often look upon the Emergency as an aberration and its excesses as alien to family planning. The endemic condition of family planning as interpreted above made manipulation not only possible but somewhat easy. The 'endemic condition' was not the cause but the instrument of abuse. Given the authoritarian ethos of the Emergency period this is very understandable. It is necessary that the family planning programme be guarded against such a possibility in future. It is time we improved and changed it because that is the best way to guard it.

Confession is good for the soul of individuals and nations. There is too much of the defensive and the self-righteous in too many high places where it is not at all necessary. The 'blame-game' is on, pointing the finger at the other fel-

low. Confession need not take the form of self-flagellation of a repentant sinner. It could be an honest exercise of a mature and confident nation looking at itself in a spirit of learning and stock-taking. The crisis of failure in family planning has been so overwhelming that there is an air of despair and despondency. (The family planning performance figures only make things worse.) This need not be. One is reminded of the Chinese way of writing the word 'crisis'. It consists of two words, namely — (i) 'danger' and (ii) 'opportunity'. It is time we concentrated on the latter, rather than being scared of the former, which unfortunately seems to be the case at present. It is in the spirit of seeking the 'opportunity-factor' in the crisis that we need to take a number of actions with all expedition and imagination. We should undertake a few corrective measures to resolve the present stalemate. In identifying these we need to start from where we are and where we need to go. A few of the possible actions we could take may be considered.

(a) *De-emphasize sterilizations*
This in fact exists as a *de-facto* reality, not as a result of deliberate action but by the fact of helplessness or the overwhelming character of the stalemate, or both. It would have made a world of difference if the 'poor performance' was part of a deliberate action plan. As has been shown eloquently, no amount of morale boosting and pep talk by senior officials descending on State capitals or by State officials on district headquarters has helped. (The Prime Minister's letters, well meaning and necessary as they were, have at best given an air of legitimacy to the idea of family planning once again. But this is not enough.) The malady is deeper. For a year or so no significant progress is likely to be made, particularly through sterilization. Let us accept it with grace and confidence instead of being panicky. Let us calculate the risks involved — and they are very serious. (It may be added here that de-emphasizing of sterilizations is a necessity under circumstances of an extraordinary character. It is an extraordinary step under extraordinary circumstances. But it should

be conceived essentially as tactical in nature, for in the ultimate analysis there is no such thing as replacing or denigrating sterilizations.)

The period of de-emphasis may be used purposefully and dynamically for correcting some serious imbalances in the family planning programme and strengthening other approaches and preparing the people for other imaginative ways. For instance, the spacing of births. We require more than medical technology for this, namely, medical technology plus social technology. To postpone having children in a predominantly pro-natalist society involves sensitive cultural and sociological realities, which the health care system does not have in adequate measure. It must acquire them in part and share this responsibility with agencies in and outside the system. Spacing of child birth as a matter of (family planning) history has never been tackled seriously because the approach necessary for this is essentially social and psychological in character

(b) *Delink disincentives from the family planning idea* Unfortunately, it is because of the thoughtless enthusiasm of a few people in a few of the cities that disincentives have been linked both mentally and emotionally with family planning. It is not enough for us to declare that compulsion is banished for all time to come. This is too general a stand. Disincentives by themselves in a poor country like India may not be applicable on a large scale but they do have a place in a selective way. Disincentives can be brought back with careful planning and education which when done should look right especially for people who regard family planning as a serious problem. Really no one takes serious objection to military conscription or compulsory education or for that matter raising the age of marriage. There has been a sufficient change in public opinion over the years about this. Keeping this broad historical view in mind, we must, in the next one or two years, delink family planning with disincentives of the kind we had and the manner in which they were operationalized. We should, through

innovative educational and communicational methods, attempt to re-legitimise urgent approaches to family planning.

(c) *Recognise the limits of the Health Care System* Something has already been indicated in the foregoing pages about the inadequacy and even irrelevance of the health care system in meeting a basic challenge of family planning. While the important role of actually providing family planning services belongs to the health system, the larger and the more important role of preparing people to appreciate and aspire for a small size family as part of an enlightened value system needs to be shared with other sectors. The health care system has taken on a job far beyond its capacity. It is a case of biting more than one can chew. The need for involving other agencies outside the health care system is of course recognised. What is not recognised is that this is not possible unless there is a basic restructuring with a view to bringing about a new developmental system at the grass roots level. In other words, there has to be an organic and functional relationship with all the major agencies and, more particularly, with the community development block.

In fact the challenge of rural development is not just integrating various developmental departments along with their functions but it is also the problem of overhauling and changing each of the departments to achieve the needs of a forward looking rural development effort. As part of this, even the health care system will have to undergo some changes. At the grass root level although some linkages exist, it is more parallel than integrated. Linkages are really tenuous and administrative in character. We need integration at the programme and process levels. This calls for basic rethinking

In spite of the several problems and difficulties that have been detailed above, there are some signs of hope for the programmes to be relevantly organized as part of a forward looking system. Some of these are:

(i) The community level health worker, now in the experimental

stage, shows promise. In spite of protests from higher quarters, an acceptance by the people and part of the medical community is evident in an incipient way. Difficulties such as they are, have arisen out of introducing a new idea in a difficult situation.

(ii) The health care system itself seems to be in a process of change. There is evidence that progressive forces, although small, are asserting themselves. The Srivastava Committee Report is a curtain raiser in this direction.

(iii) The idea of introducing an indigenous system of medicine into the governmental programme along with the modern system is a welcome step. This is likely to strengthen the country's approach to health and family planning at the grass roots level. There is a danger, however, of the indigenous medicine system being tagged on to the modern system. Mutually supportive systems should be evolved as early as possible, if necessary, by firm policy action.

(iv) It was known that the educated elite were for family planning but the lower middle classes are now (even in the Northern Hindi belt) shedding their pro-natalist tendency.

(v) Bio-medical sciences are looking for appropriate technologies to subserve the cause of the ordinary man

These are some of the signs indicating the direction we need to take. *All these, however, are not part and parcel of a package within an integrated policy.* There is too much of the piece-meal in them. This is the most disturbing kind of lacunae, out of which many of the problems arise.

Some implications for restructuring and even a few suggestions have been indicated above. It may be worthwhile to look at some of the more successful experiments in family planning elsewhere for possible use and replication nationally.

In a study made by the WHO/UNICEF it was found that the suc-

cessful programmes had the following elements. (a) strong political commitment; (b) community leadership which was deeply involved in the work process of the programme; (c) de-professionalization of work including the identification of an effective local community worker; (d) development of a simplified technology changing the existing system against the background of a forward looking socio-economic development background.

It would also be instructive to look at the Chinese programme. Against the background of an authoritarian ethos they have succeeded in bringing down the birth rates substantially. Three programme elements are part of their policy: family planning by personal example, using group process to unfreeze tradition and resistance, relating agricultural production with family planning. (If you have more children you get less to eat and with more production and less children there is more to go around.)

With all the problems already identified and some of the hopeful signs indicated, what is sorely lacking is an appropriate system. The basic elements are a decentralized effort at the lowest level in a system that ensures maximum participation by the people and where methods and technologies serve the cause of man and where value creation for small families is more basic than services for family planning. The present system with all its limitations has a potential for the same. What is lacking is political will and commitment within a broad national ideology that looks upon family planning as an urgent necessity. There are many irksome and difficult decisions to be taken in bringing about a relevant system, which is only possible in a highly supportive political atmosphere. This is our biggest problem today. Political leaders of all ideological moorings have a shared concern in poverty. If they would only realize that the problem of poverty cannot be solved without solving the population problem, we could begin a new day in our country. The basic challenge before the country so far as family planning is concerned is, therefore, political and ideological.

Family planning 1978

BANOO J. COYAJI

THE most serious problem facing the country today is a run-away population growth. The government accepts the fact that there is no alternative to reduction of family size if the future prosperity of the nation is to be foreguarded. It has rightly underscored an element of maternity child care by renaming the programme 'Family Welfare'. It has eschewed all forms of coercion and pressure. It is determined to pursue the programme on a purely voluntary basis relying on education, motivation and persuasion.

Eighteen months have elapsed. There is no evidence that people are responding voluntarily. The programme has received a serious setback and there is urgent necessity to rehabilitate it. No useful purpose will be served in wasting time in holding a post-mortem. Our energies should be spent in restarting the programme and pursuing it vigorously.

There should be an end once and for all to the unfortunate controversy over the relative role of socio-economic development and family planning in population decline. Nobody disputes the fact that population will decline if the socio-economic condition of the masses improves, there is more equitable distribution of resources, literacy rises—specially female literacy—and

the high infant and child mortality falls.

It is not a question of either socio-economic development or family planning. It is not even a question of which will pay better dividends, nor just a question of time because ultimately both are long term measures. The important issue is that family planning must be vigorously pursued now and urgently so that the gains of socio-economic development are not eroded by a run-away population growth as has hitherto happened in the last two decades.

There is no doubt that the only way a small family norm will become a way of life is when family planning is woven into the fabric of society as a part of a total approach to improve the living condition of the masses. Some degree of development is necessary whereby major dependence on small units like family, kinship and caste is shifted to dependence on large social units—only then will fertility start to decline. This will only occur in an ecological setting which has achieved a significant measure of social and economic development. Modernization will bring about an alternation of values relative to children and child bearing and a desire to achieve a higher socio-economic status among a large number of couples who are capable of reproduction,

causing a decline in population voluntarily.

For this, the government must commit itself to improving the lifestyles of all its citizens — men and women with provision of health, education, employment, housing, social security, pension, redistribution of land, income, wealth and social benefits and not just to a few elite. Only then will it create conditions that will bring down the present high fertility voluntarily. Commitment by itself is not enough. It must be implemented and the citizens must perceive the fruits of it. It is a fallacy to believe that only knowledge and means are needed to ensure the spread of family limitation among people. The desire for smaller families is a necessary prerequisite for voluntary acceptance of family planning programmes. There must be structural changes in the roles of the family, of women and of children that are desirable. This change of attitude is dependent on socio-economic development. Once this change of attitude occurs, the fall in birth rate is automatic. Till then the government has no choice but to pursue family planning programmes as vigorously as possible in order to curb the high population growth so that it does not worsen the existing hopelessly inadequate standard of living.

The draft five-year plan estimates the population of India on 1 January, 1978 at 634.2 million growing at the rate of 2.14% per year, i.e., near about 13 million per year. The expected birth rate for 1977-1978 has been worked out by M.V.S. Rao (Director, Evaluation Department of Family Welfare, Government of India) at 33.0 per 1000. He has also indicated the magnitude of effort needed to bring the birth rate down by just 3 points to 30.0 by 1982-1983 — 25 million sterilizations, 5 million I.U.D. insertions and 25 million new acceptors of conventional contraceptives. Judging from today's performance, or rather the lack of it, the above target seems impossible to achieve.

endorsement and active and vocal support of the programme by leaders of public opinion — political, cultural, social, religious, etc.

Since January 1978, the Prime Minister and the Health Minister have made several speeches and have called conferences of State Health Ministers, Secretaries, Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, voluntary organizations, etc. At the national level the leadership has declared and repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the family planning programme in all its aspects. It is not even clear that the message has reached the State ministries, zilla parishads, panchayat samitis etc. Six months of 1978 have passed but it is evident that no action has resulted at the grass-root level. The reasons for this are the tension and conflict in the components of the ruling party in general and the Central Cabinet in particular, a lack of co-ordination between the Centre and State governments, an instability of many of the State governments and the coming elections to the local bodies — the municipal corporations, municipalities, zilla parishads. The instability at the top has seeped down right to the village panchayat level.

The 1975-76 campaign has proved conclusively that family planning can gain momentum if the political leadership is wholly and vocally behind it. The political parties have the machinery to reach the masses and galvanize them into action. In 1975 as soon as a directive was sent from the Prime Minister and C.M.'s Secretariat the message went right down to the village panchayat level and there was a transformation in the tempo of the work. This is an important prerequisite for putting the family planning programme back on the right path.

The population problem is too vital to be left to the tender mercies of any one political party. It is necessary that the Prime Minister call a conference of all national leaders for a dialogue and a commitment. The family planning programme is so important for our survival that it should be above conflicting ideologies, party politics and expediency. An all-party programme should be chalked out so

that it can be vigorously implemented in each and every State, municipality, local body, zilla parishad and panchayat samiti irrespective of which party is in power. The political parties have an organization at the grassroot level. These workers should be change agents to spread the message of family planning with practically no extra capital outlay.

Among the qualifications of political aspirants for tickets for elections to the Lok Sabha down to the village panchayat, a major consideration should be their accepting the small family norm themselves, if in the eligible age group, and the performance of their constituencies in achieving family planning targets.

The first part of the programme, then, is to educate the political leadership on the perils facing this country and the realities of population dynamics. Every minister in the Central and State Cabinet, every M.P., M.L.A., member of the zilla parishad must be made aware of the grave situation. Material should be prepared in different languages in a concise, precise, clear and imaginative way that will convince the political leadership, national and local, and this should be distributed to each and every member of the party.

The hard driving commitment on the part of the top political leadership, necessary to galvanize the people to action, is absent. It cannot be expected in today's unstable political situation. Even the bureaucracy will not be able to give the needed thrust to rehabilitate the programme so long as the bogey of 'coercion' faces them.

India will have to reverse its tendency to depend only on what can be done by the government and to ignore the whole spectrum of life that goes on outside its purview. It requires the total commitment and involvement of individuals, agencies, organizations, public and private, lay and professional. There must be a national dialogue at all levels in State capitals, cities, taluka, towns and villages. Informed public opinion will and must be created. The dimensions of the problem must be understood by the people. Solutions

What then is the possible solution? The first and immediate step should be to legitimize the discredited family planning programme by

must be found and plans implemented. All should be involved and committed influential leaders of public opinion, decision makers, national and local, religious and secular, educationists and students, professionals, media specialists, industrialists, employers, labour leaders, women's organizations, youth organizations, social service organizations and clubs, army personnel, active and retired and the people at large in cities, towns and villages. This is the only way it can become a people's movement. They need not and perhaps cannot come together at national or State level but they can in small, effective, motivated and committed groups.

Literature will have to be prepared first to educate this class on the implications and the urgency of the population situation. No popular movement or upsurge can occur unless the facts are explained effectively and repeatedly. Only then can a public opinion be created to push the government into action.

Simultaneously, it is necessary to take a quiet second look at the Karan Singh National Family Planning Policy of 1976 with its packet of incentives and disincentives and involvement of the whole government machinery. There was nothing conceptually wrong with the policy. It was mauled out of existence by abuses and atrocities with disastrous results. The plan had succeeded in the western and southern States. It can succeed all over the country if humanely and justly enforced. Massive and imaginative incentives will add to its success.

Incentives have played a very important role in previous success stories in family planning implementation, e.g., Ernakulam and Gujarat mass vasectomy camps in 1969-1971 etc., and in Maharashtra in 1976. They can be in the form of cash or kind to the adopter, motivator and provider. They can be long term in the form of insurance, social security, non-birth, non-pregnancy schemes, bonus, prizes, gratuity with a myriad of attractive modifications.

Group incentives have been tried in the past with varying success. They are useful as they create peer sanction and peer pressure. They can

be quite effective with 'solemn public ceremonies' and 'oath taking' etc. A great part of the success of the 1976 campaign was due to the prizes given to centres, village panchayats, zilla parishads, municipalities, municipal corporations, districts, etc.

Special incentives should be offered to those who accept the norm of 2-3 children: employment-preference to those who are unmarried upto age 22 or if married have no children, preference to cheap housing benefits, preference for promotions, increments, crossing the efficiency bar, higher gratuity benefits, pension, bonus, contributory provident fund, higher tax relief and attractive insurance schemes and retirement benefits.

Tax payers should pay an extra income-tax on a sliding scale according to the level of income after the third or even the second child. This is essential as the above mentioned incentives will not be attractive to the higher income brackets. It must be remembered that a rich man's child uses much more of the available resources of the country than a poor man's child.

Cost benefit and cost-effectiveness studies undertaken by K. C. Seal and others have conclusively shown that a conservative benefit cost ratio of a birth saved is 16:1. He has said that 'It has been shown that expenditure incurred so far on the family planning programme in India is about 3 times more effective than other normal development projects undertaken in the country during the last two decades. It is worth mentioning that besides more rapid rise in per capita income, family planning programme is known to yield many other economic and indirect benefits which are conducive to improving the quality of life of the general population'. It is therefore worthwhile to harness resources for the programme. A commission should be immediately appointed consisting of economists, actuaries, bankers, insurance experts and social and behavioural scientists to work out attractive, imaginative and feasible long-term incentives.

One fails to understand why there seems to have developed an allergy

to the word 'Disincentive'. It is a basic fact in psychology that behaviour in the living world can only be changed by 'rewards and punishment'. Disincentives if justly and humanely used are a very effective tool for 'the persuasive coercion' needed today to restart the programme in earnest.

The family planning programme itself requires a radical change in its implementation. The services have been by and large substandard. The centre of all activity was the family planning clinic with some half-hearted attempt to extend it to the community. The whole atmosphere was activity oriented and never result oriented. There has been a crisis of management everywhere — in urban clinics, rural clinics, post-partum programmes and certainly in the mass camps. The client's convenience, fears, problems and difficulties have received scant attention. Counselling, both pre-operative and post-operative, has been non-existent, operative skills mediocre and rapport between doctor and client poor. The health department and medical men and women have a minor role to play. They must provide only the technical back up.

To make the programme effective, various disciplines will have to be involved — management, motivation, both mass media and interpersonal, demography, social and behavioural sciences, social marketing and community health. During the present lull there should be a complete overhaul in the programme. It is necessary to learn from the mistakes of the past and have the courage to rectify them with truly innovative methods.

An attempt must be made to identify change agents in the community among formal and informal leaders, women's groups, youth clubs, satisfied adopters, village *dais* and teach them communication skills so that the message will reach the masses.

In the last year or so one exciting new development has emerged in delivery of health care to the rural masses — the concept of the community health worker selected from the community by the community.

and responsible to the community to look after their primary and basic health needs. Many pilot projects all over the country have shown how much these workers can do for the health and welfare of the community with short and simple training and repeated re-orientation. Nearly 50,000 such workers have already been trained and are at their posts. The idea is to train one or two for each village for the five and a half lakh villages of India. There are many pitfalls. Many midcourse corrections will have to be made as experience is gained. Training will have to be flexible to suit local conditions.

The next step is to train a large force of multipurpose workers and health auxiliaries to supervise the work of the community health workers who should not be left alone. Their work should be supervised, carefully monitored and evaluated. If the community is to take the responsibility for its own health and welfare the leaders, formal and informal, should themselves be trained in what to expect of the community health workers: women, the educated unemployed and young people should be involved. The community should be made to realize its rights and its aspirations for its own development so that its felt needs can be met.

This whole team of health workers should be involved in family planning work integrated with maternity, child and primary health care. Their role is mainly educational, motivational, propaganda, community organization, management, logistics and marketing. Their training must address itself to these aspects of their work. It is a fallacy to call community health workers 'bare foot doctors'. They are neither qualified nor equipped to fill that role. They are not third rate physicians nor are they extensions of physicians trained to replace or support them. They are trained for a task which doctors are not trained for and which, with few exceptions, they would do poorly and which certainly does not require 10+2+3+7 years training.

If family planning is to reach the masses, the community health workers and health auxiliaries must be

fully utilized as change agents. They should do promotional work themselves and build up around them a net-work of volunteers to take on this work. Every community has traditional media of oral communication — the village gossip, the indigenous *dai*, the barber. The C.H.W. should identify and utilize all such people for spreading the message. They should be depot holders of conventional contraceptives and the pill. They should organize others in the community for this purpose. They are members of the community, respected and trusted and sharing the aspirations of the community, and therefore are more acceptable than the government employees. They can be voluntary workers or be paid a commission of Rs. 50 for part-time work. They will organize women's clubs, mothers' clubs, farmers' club, youth clubs, cooperatives, discussion groups, adult literacy classes which will be forums for health and family planning work. As an ultimate goal, health and family planning activities will become the nucleus of a mass community effort to mobilize its resources for dynamic self help to assume responsibility for its total development.

The clinic should no longer be the primary family planning delivery service but only a technical back up to the programme. The doctors should only perform the role for which they are trained — operations, treatment of complications, insertion of IUCDs until the health auxiliaries are trained to do this and teaching. There should be only two doctors at the centre of which one should have some experience in obstetrics. One can easily be Ayurvedic trained. The third member of the team should not be a doctor but a social scientist. Thus it will be seen that improving family planning services does not just mean more centres, more staff and more resources but a totally new philosophy to make these resources more effective.

The Prime Minister and Health Ministry have unequivocally and repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to the family planning programme. In spite of various pious hopes, protestations and slogans of a quarter of a century of planning, nothing

was really done for the health care of the masses. For the first time the government's proposed Health Plan shows a genuine desire to deliver health services to the completely neglected 80% of its population living in five and a half lakh villages. This is manifested by a time bound programme to train community health workers selected from the community by the community and place them in position in a short space of time. There is much opposition to this scheme from vested interests. This scheme must not be allowed to fail. The only hope of providing health care and family planning services to the masses is the community health workers scheme.

The Planning Commission has translated the commitment of the Government of India by increasing the allocation in the draft five-year plan for health and family welfare, rural health by 308%, indigenous systems of medicine 140%, family welfare 53%, MCH 188% and adult education 1011%. It has also given great importance to the removal of unemployment and significant under-employment and an appreciable rise in the standard of living of the poorest sections of the population. The draft plan visualizes that by the end of 10 years, unemployment would be practically eliminated. None of these hopes will be fulfilled unless the run-away population growth is curbed.

There is no time to wait. With the population estimated at 634 million increasing at the rate of more than 1 million a month the time to act is now. The government is fully aware of the serious situation. The question is, will hard pragmatic and not so popular decisions be taken to revitalize and intensify the population control programme in the present political climate? Can we create informed opinion among leaders outside government and the people at large which will compel government to take those decisions?

The task to resuscitate the near moribund family planning programme is by no means easy, but it is not impossible. It is so vital to our survival that no effort nor sacrifice is too much.

Contraceptive technology

K N SHARMA

THE problem of population is not just a crisis of numbers. It is intricately and intimately inter-woven with the problems of agriculture and industry, health and education, religion and politics, and with the socio-economic and cultural milieu, to say the least. Any attempt to tackle the question of population control in an isolated fashion is, therefore, bound to fail. What is needed is the

enunciation and delineation of these interacting factors and the planning of a strategy to dovetail our efforts commensurate with our resources and the peculiarly characteristic requirements of our country.

India is predominantly rural oriented and is potentially a tradition-bound nation which legitimately takes pride in its rich cultural heri-

tage This is a feature which makes it distinctly different from the countries in the West And in the circumstances, it is quite conceivable that the finest of technological advances which have paid rich dividends in fertility control in western countries, may not necessarily bear desirable fruits in India A transplant, however good it may be, if alien to the host tissue, is likely to be rejected Let us ponder over the characteristics of our 'soil' and see what science has brought in its wake — its achievements and failure and the possible reasons thereof. What are the chances of success with the application of science and technology to this explosive problem of population, or is it that the problem of population today is a consequence of the application of science and technology? We are aware that there is no ethics in science, it is amoral and can be used as much for the benefit as for the detriment of mankind. What we need is to cultivate a scientific and rational outlook.

Experimental evidences in relatively simple but controlled conditions reveal that overcrowding by itself leads to over-run emotions and a bizarre form of behaviour both in the domain of self-preservation and the preservation of the species. Animals fight for territorial rights, develop tendencies of hoarding food, feel insecure, anxious and agitated, and show signs of distorted grooming, pleasure seeking and sexual behaviour

Man is a far more complex animal with a type of brain in which affect-based beliefs are dissociated from and are in perpetual conflict with the reasoning intellect The result is a split-minded or schizophrenic mentality, and the contrast is much exaggerated in a country like ours where sentimental and emotional ties of cultural, communal, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the past are loaded on to the socio-economic realities of the day to add to the already built-in dichotomy of the human brain Our primary emotions are associated with such basic needs as food, water, air, territory, sex and so forth, and out of these, primary emotions such as fear, anger, hate, love, familiarity, stran-

geness and a host of other feelings One shudders at the prospect of the population explosion being added on to this overcrowding in man

The description which follows highlights the biomedical achievements in the field of fertility control in the country, points out the existing lacunae and indicates some possible future directions for taking remedial measures

Coupled with the advances achieved in the field of agriculture and industry during the last three decades following independence, a vast network of institutions for education, research and health care have been established to build a sound biomedical scientific edifice Life expectancy has increased from 30 to 52, morbidity and mortality has shown a rapid decline, dreaded diseases like small pox have been eradicated and many others brought to a vanishing point, all these are signs of positive contributions made by science But there is another side of the coin With the lowering of the high death rates, increase in longevity of life and untouched birth rate, the problem of population is reaching alarming proportions The death rates of to-day cannot be interfaced with the birth rates of previous centuries It is as if science has been both a boon and a bane to the society

In the field of fertility control, science has provided a variety of methods A large number of institutions, foundations, agencies and individuals have been involved The Family Planning Foundation has justifiably taken a timely lead in addressing itself to the number of issues in the area of reproductive biology and family planning As one of the major steps, the Foundation has launched an intensive programme to collect the information on the present status of contraception in India and find out the lacunae for the failures, whether the efficacy of the method, its cost or its acceptability, or its failure is attributable to the delivery system, or the reasons of effectiveness restricted to stratified population samples because of their particular attitudes, demographic peculiarities and ecological problems

The Status Report by the Foundation is envisaged to use this information as a base and suggest steps for future implementation All through, the emphasis has been on the local resources, local needs and local capacity and capability to deliver the goods It should be pointed out, however, that the universal nature of the problem with global implications has not been lost sight of in this endeavour but has been rather meaningfully utilised both by comparison and contrast The aim of all these efforts has been to check the growing population in a manner that the growth and development of the nation would take place unhampered, and serve towards attaining a better quality of life and human fulfilment How far this has been achieved or is likely to be achieved remains an open question.

One of the early devices used for contraception were the condoms Nirodh, the name of a condom in India, has met with unimpressive success. There are several reasons for its not catching the imagination of the masses While monetary constraints weighed with some, others did not accept the condoms free since gifts on a routine basis are traditionally looked down upon If lubricated, extra thin, exotic coloured Nirodhs are artistically and tastefully packaged and designed for sexual stimulation and publicised for open promotion of sex with pleasure and without fear, and protected sex being the running theme, the outcome may be more favourable.

There is an urgent necessity to learn about the attitudes, knowledge and sexual practices of the prospective customers Marketing experts should be freely involved as they are most qualified to create a demand for the product The research into human sexuality should be oriented to the millions and combined in the package health plan of contraception, nutrition, immunization, anti-natal and post-natal care and health education There should thus be a radical rethinking and reorientation in the marketing, advertising, and promotion of Nirodh Simultaneously, the use of spermicides — jellies, creams and foam tablets — should be expanded

with Nirodh to make it more effective and reduce failure rates

These spermicides were the most popular methods of fertility regulation till 1960. Their usage was considerably reduced in the next decade due to the introduction of more effective oral pills and intra-uterine contraceptive devices. The pill with its progestogen and estrogen component, has undergone marked changes leading to the use of progressively reduced doses but with more powerful and sustained anti-fertility effects. As a result of intensive research, hormonal contraception resulted in the advent of second generation contraceptives, the injectables, and the implants. These devices are to be used less frequently and the effects are long lasting.

In spite of these developments, the incidence of side effects has once again focussed attention on the use of vaginal chemical contraception. Their usefulness in venereal disease prophylaxis has further favoured their usage, and calls for a reappraisal of their efficacy as contraceptives. Search was also made for indigenous plants with anti-fertility properties and considerable work has led to the identification of some Indian plants with potent anti-fertility effects.

In recent years another dimension has been added by the use of immunological methods to control fertility. A vaccine capable of preventing pregnancy, which is reversible, and free from side effects, is amenable to mass use, will not require highly trained personnel and is likely to be available at low cost, is an attractive alternate method to the currently available procedures of contraception. It has the advantage of a rather small and infrequent intake of the immunising agent, thus sparing the body from continued medication. The prospects are bright but there is a long way to go before the objective could be reached and by that time the problem may acquire unmanageable dimensions.

The routes of administration which may be more effective with less side effects and specific in action have resulted in procedures like nasal spray of contraceptive steroids as well as intra-uterine and vaginal

administration of prostaglandins and other steroidal and non-steroidal preparations. Sterilisation in females both by surgical techniques and non-surgical occlusions of the tube have also been practised under laboratory conditions and clinical situations.

It is indeed interesting to find that after more than two decades of fairly successful hormonal contraception in the female, the development of reversible methods of suppression of fertility in the male, are still at a preliminary stage. No doubt, there are distinct advantages of contraception in the females. The female ovulates once in a month in contrast to the male with continuous spermatogenesis. Invariably one egg is shed, compared to the millions of sperms in a single ejaculate. Further, hindrances in the female genital tract, stringent requirements for implantation and a host of other factors make females biologically superior for de-optimisation of events.

Apart from all this, does it not also reflect on the social values and attitudes existing in the society of male supremacy; or is it that women are generally more receptive to the adoption of family planning methods, once the desired family size is obtained. If so, the psychology of sex must be taken into consideration. The society in general and the rural masses in particular, may be willing to consider fertility control after male child births but not after female children are born. One has to tackle the question of base values at the grassroots.

There is a growing feeling among the family welfare planning authorities for the urgent need of fertility control in males and to find out other modalities in addition to condoms, periodic abstinence and vasectomy. The aim is to reversibly control male fertility without compromising libido and potency. The aftermath of vasectomies and steps taken for other contraceptive measures in the populous States of north India like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are still fresh in our minds. It has been a major contributory factor virtually to wipe out the ruling political party from these States. Surely, the masses were not

only ignorant about the usefulness of these methods but more importantly lacked a sense of conviction and motivation. It also presupposes that the manner of undertaking these measures lacked imagination and goodwill, they were conducted in an unsatisfactory way and proved counter productive. Delivery of the methods and a proper coupling between the precepts and the implementation of knowledge is thus extremely important.

Besides, monetary and other incentives formed the basis and an end by itself in many cases where people were prepared to undergo the unpleasant task of subjecting themselves to these contraceptive measures not because of its usefulness per se but because of the benefits they were likely to derive. We have seriously to consider the reasons for such apathy, and if these are the trends that reflect the thinking and the mood of the masses, essentially what is needed is to instil confidence in order to bring about the radical re-orientation of a new value system amongst the public.

In addition to these approaches bearing on science and technology, the Government of India has taken a bold step in bringing in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act which came into existence in 1972. The MTP Act is not a centrally sponsored scheme and the increase in the number of centres providing abortion care services and training of medical personnel is considered the sole responsibility of the State health departments. Several methods of termination of pregnancy are available according to the duration of gestation and the emphasis is for the simple, cheap, acceptable and safe procedures not requiring hospitalisation.

Consequent to the woefully inadequate abortion care facilities particularly in the semi-urban and rural areas, coupled with illiteracy and ignorance of MTP laws, there has been an enormous gap between the knowledge and application of technology. If induced abortion is to have an impact on fertility regulation, proper services and abortion care facilities have to be considerably expanded. A change in attitude

of the medical profession towards induced abortion is also necessary and would in turn influence the behaviour of women applying for termination.

Granting that science has provided sufficient technical know-how to control population, has the outcome been adequately rewarding? We claim that we have achieved self-sufficiency in food production while simultaneously acknowledging that nutrition remains a major problem of the country. Total national income suggests a noteworthy improvement but the individual remains virtually at the same poverty line as reflected in the low standard of his living. Over 12,000 doctors graduate annually but the doctor population ratio is far below the expected figures. We are the largest democracy in the world but democracy to us means 'independence' of thought and action. India has vast treasures of history, architecture and sculpture but their commercial exploitation is missing. We have to get out of this aura of self-sufficiency.

What seems to matter is not how much we have but what we are able to do with what we have. Every mouth brings with it a pair of hands, but while the mouth begins to function automatically at birth, the hands grow up to earn a living only after fifteen to twenty years. The gap has to be narrowed and this truth is to be hammered into all homes since over forty per cent of the population in India to-day is under fifteen years of age. How do we plan to raise the level of living standards of a population with 13 million being added annually when the present requirements are not being met? While on the one hand the cheapest methods of contraception may not be cheap enough for a person who cannot meet even one square meal a day, the reduction in the number of family members is believed to impede the help sought by him in the field, thus further shattering his precarious economy. We have to find answers to these questions.

It is unnecessary to argue whether the central problem is population control or economic development and whether poverty is hampering population control or population

increase has brought in poverty. The pragmatic approach will be to provide a judicious blending of national economic development and the distribution system and couple it with population control measures. Increasing the age of marriage to 18 in females and 21 in males, introduction of the adult education drive (about 50 per cent of India's population is in the age range of 15 to 55 years) with emphasis not just on literacy but on over-all development, the recently introduced programme of the village health worker, may all help and in fact may be fruitfully utilised to make a substantial impact on the success of fertility control programmes.

But the crucial issue still remains at large. Unless the masses are 'educated' themselves to think of the necessity for population control, discarding the time honoured legacy of religious and social compulsions of large families, and provision made for pragmatic solutions to their economic ills, the efforts may be wasted. There has to be brought in a changed value system — social, economic and educational. Emphases on excellence in doctors and specialists, hospitals and institutions has now to be placed in the field and in the masses. The constraints of our social ills, customs and religious taboos have to be compensated by the right educational trends and meaningful economic developments. The frames of reference have to be geared to our changing needs. It is a gigantic task in which we have to participate actively and together as actors, directors, spectators, critics, all at once, in this drama of the human dilemma.

A coherent national policy with a definite shift in its priorities towards health and education, sanitation, water supply and nutrition needs to be evolved to ensure rapid and simultaneous reduction of birth and death rates. The people participating in the delivery system must not only be convinced of the programme but should be dedicated to the core as much if not more than the masses for whom the programme is meant. Let us rededicate ourselves to the task and exploit the benefits of science to our maximum usage in a rational way.

Politician's role

RAMLAL PARIKH

AN all round exercise is on regarding the implications of the population problem in relation to development. Population and development are now so inseparable that it is hard to think of either in isolation. It is not only the population size but also the manner of regulating it that affects the development process. The kind of strategy adopted for development will also affect both the size as well as the quality of population

The development process is intrinsically connected with the problems of population growth. Our experience has proved beyond doubt that the paternalistic package of welfare programmes in the name of development, without the backing of political will and political action, do not cut much ice. The problems of developing societies are so vast and complex that they can hardly be handled adequately by State machinery alone. For any programme of development, the strength of political will is a precondition. However, the mere expression of political will, if not

translated into political action, will hardly be meaningful

If we are to learn from our experience of planning in the last 25 years, it should be clear to everyone that non-involvement of political functionaries as such has been the main factor for the failure of many of our development schemes. One must realise that politics is the greatest factor of change in our national life today. Our State machinery, working in isolation from the political life of the country, has failed miserably in creating responsive cooperation from the people. It has failed in building up direct communication with the mass of people for whom development programmes are devised. Others who attempted it outside the political system on a non-governmental basis, have also not been able to create a sufficient impact to be able to foster a system-change. Whether it is adult education or family planning, or improvement of agriculture or public hygiene, it is of the utmost importance to involve the political functionaries of the country from top

to bottom, as motivators and communicators in the areas they represent. Unless this is ensured, things will not move in a massive way.

Whatever drawbacks our political system has shown and whatever its inadequacies, one can hardly deny its potential for change. Since political action is not recognised as an important component of our development process, there has been a widespread lack of communication at the grass root level. Its consequence has been disastrous — the benefits of development accruing to an oligarchy of elites, depriving the masses of their legitimate share in the fruits of development

That the Indian people cherish a democratic and open system based on persuasion and co-operation, has been amply demonstrated in the parliamentary elections held in March 1977. There are two clear lessons of these elections. Firstly, that the people will strongly react to any coercive method. Secondly, that they possess sufficient political will to assert themselves the moment an opportunity for doing so is available. That is why, in most of our elections, people have expressed a clear dislike or disapproval of particular programmes which had an element of imposition.

It is against this background that the programme for family planning in India has to be viewed. The programme was just a casual one in the first four five-year plans and picked up only in the fifth plan, particularly in 1974-75, 1975-76. The percentage of couples protected by all methods by the end of the second plan was hardly 0.2% and it reached 16.4% by 1974. The target for the fifth plan (1974-79) was 35.9%, which would involve about three to three and a half crores of people. While enlarging the family planning programmes into a movement was a right step, what it lacked was the recognition of the fact that no movement with coercive methods can ever succeed in a country like ours. During the Emergency, the programme was virtually turned into a mere statistical programme, unconcerned about the political, psychological and cultural implications of a coercive effort on our society.

The 1976 National Population

Policy fixed the birth rate target at 30 per thousand for 1978-79 and 25 per thousand for 1983-84. The new Policy suggested measures like the revising of the marriage age, freezing of population figures for purposes of representation in the national Parliament at the 1971 level until 2001 and linking in part Central assistance to States with their performance in family planning, increased attention to girls' education, proper place of population education, increase in monetary compensation for sterilization, institution of group awards, intimate association of voluntary organizations, greater attention to research, and greater use of motivational media. However, the policy left open scope for compulsory sterilization, which in fact isolated the family planning programme from the complex of other developmental programmes. The coercive measures and compulsory disincentives did incalculable damage to public life, from which the country has still not recovered even though 18 months have lapsed since the end of the Emergency. This we can ill afford. A new forceful approach inspired by the urgency of the task but tempered by the pitfalls and lessons of the past is what we need. If we have any lesson to learn from the 1976 policy, it is that any overdoing backed by coercive measures creates so many mal-practices that it results in defeating the very purpose of the programme.

The post-Emergency government of the Janata Party had to evolve its population policy under the very serious handicap of a defamed, dis-trusted policy and had to resort to changing the name from family planning to family welfare in order to dissociate it from the coercion and compulsion experienced during the Emergency. The new policy of June 1977 states categorically that there is no room for compulsion, coercion or pressures of any sort and pleads for an educational and voluntary effort. The second important thing the new policy statement emphasises is that the State has an obligation to look after the medical complications resulting from sterilization. It also recognises the potential of village panchayats as change-agents in this programme. The new policy state-

ment, therefore, in most respects maintains a continuity with the '76 policy statement although it radically differs in terms of its approach and method.

However, the set-back of the programme which came during the Emergency, has resulted in postponing the target for 1978-79 to 1982-83. This is certainly disturbing and every effort must be made to recover the time lost in view of the magnitude and gravity of the problem. Just as coercive methods harmed the prospects of the family planning programme, the complacency arising out of not resorting to coercion by itself, is equally or even more disastrous. The widening of its scope from family planning to family welfare should not result in a lack of positive drive for this type of nationwide programme. It is unfortunate that the June 1977 policy has slackened due to lack of political drive. In fact it makes political action more imperative. Not only do the incentives for family planning have to be accelerated but the atmosphere of complacency must be got rid of without loss of time.

It is here that political functionaries, which include Members of Parliament, legislators, as well as members of the Municipal Corporations and Panchayats have a role to play. In spite of many set-backs to our development effort and particularly to our target for the re-distribution of wealth, the role of political parties and political functionaries in such a crucial programme as family planning has not been fully recognised. The fear of political dissensions has so gripped all our planners and administrators that they work on certain miscalculated assumptions and even allow a programme to die rather than associate political functionaries with it. In a system of representative democracy that is prevalent in our time, it is surprising that the role of the representatives of the people is not fully recognised and availed of for creating a responsive co-operation among the people. This is not to suggest that our political system is an ideal one or without problems or without distortions or without drawbacks. But granting all its inadequacies, it is so far the most effective channel of commu-

nicating with the masses. The knowledge of the ethnography, economy, psychology of the people of the constituencies of different of legislative bodies is easily available to a member of any legislative body. It would aid the hastening of the development process by using them as real motivators. The constituency, therefore, should be accepted as a basic unit and its elected representative, (belonging to any party or group) in any type of legislative body should be accepted as a via-media for communication. In most cases, the communication gap, which is different from an information gap, is a vital factor which creates misgivings in the minds of the people. Therefore, irrespective of political differences and partisan attitudes that prevail, an elected representative of the area should not only be encouraged to take an initiative in motivating people for the family planning programme but also enabled to do so by providing the necessary facilities. The dangers in not involving political functionaries are greater than if they were used in such programmes.

The role of the legislators, whether of Parliament or State legislatures or local governments, is now being recognised on a global scale at the initiative of UNFPA. UNFPA took the lead in fostering such an initiative of the parliamentarians and legislators on the question of population and development. A group of parliamentarians from nine countries met at Tokyo in March 1978 and have formed an International Steering Committee to convene a World Conference of Parliamentarians in Sri Lanka in August 1979, to discuss the role of parliamentarians on the crucial subject of 'Population and Development'. The Tokyo statement significantly says, 'The Parliamentarians commit themselves to a new initiative to bring home to their own Parliaments and people the consequence of current rates of population from 4 billion now to 8 billion within 40 years. Time is of the essence since a delay of one generation in bringing world population to a stable level would increase the world population by 70%'. The statement also underlines an increased need for the participation of women to enable them

to exercise their basic human rights. It also states that the regulation of population growth is a programme for an improvement in the quality of life.

One of the criticisms of the family planning programme is that it does not reach the weaker sections in the rural and tribal areas, and has assumed the same elitist form as other development programmes. Since the programme is being conducted through an educated elite, this is understandable to an extent. It is of utmost importance, therefore, to involve the legislators. They would provide an effective link between the people and the government which is sorely missing. If their role is to be recognised, the goals or the level of achievement should be fixed in terms of performance in each constituency where a committee of legislators under the chairmanship of a member of the Lok Sabha of that constituency along with members of the State legislature and local bodies should be formed. This should be made the most effective forum for handling a large scale and most crucial programme of family planning.

The legislators will also have to be so oriented that irrespective of party affiliations and groups, they would have certain obligations to the people of their constituency. Their initiatives in promoting programmes like adult education, family planning etc., can only be successful if they eschew partisan politics which will also enable them to discharge their obligations more effectively. Here is a concept of widening the grooves of one's party or a section of the community from which he or she is elected and recognising that the legislators role is not limited to the Houses of Parliament or legislatures but has an even greater role as mass educator for basic national problems. While the legislators do attempt this kind of a role outside the legislature by receiving complaints of the people and attending to them wherever possible, their role as mass educators is as yet extremely limited. The government would do well to facilitate the emergence of their role quickly if the rising tide of population is to be checked. 20 Indian

parliamentarians have recently constituted a parliamentary group to develop this role for parliamentarians as well as legislators. State-wise parliamentary groups will be set up involving legislators and representatives of the people in local bodies.

Coming to the existing political scene in India, the Prime Minister has written several letters and has emphasized the importance of the family planning programme and cautioned all the Chief Ministers and his Cabinet Ministers about the adverse effects of a decline in family planning goals on economic development due to a rapidly multiplying population. He has drawn attention to the disturbing situation that has arisen because of the poor performance in April and May 1978 compared to April and May 1977. He has written three letters on this problem. This he has done in spite of his advocacy of development of self control in family planning for several decades. Many of us, who at one time were scared about the degeneration of moral values because of a widespread use of contraceptives and mass scale sterilizations, have reconciled to the fact that population has to be controlled even by artificial means. Despite Gandhiji's advocacy of not resorting to artificial means of birth control, many Gandhians have concluded that a nation-wide campaign to limit the size of the family has to be maintained and all methods of family planning, according to one's choice, should be promoted. Politically, therefore, the atmosphere at present is much more conducive to the nation-wide promotion of this programme. Although there are no ideological barriers, and there is no question of any hesitation in an acceptance of this programme, the main handicap is the lack of political action. This can come only by channelising political functionaries comprising of parliamentarians and legislators and making the electoral constituencies as the unit of performance rather than State or District administrations.

Some improvements in the programme from past experience are necessary to ensure its widest dissemination. It is only a mobile

service, reaching house to house, that will motivate the people quickly rather than the opening of clinics in selected places. An inhibition to clinics still persists in a large way. Mobile family planning teams should be organised by medical students, going from village to village, with the help of the elected representatives of the State legislature and Parliament. It hardly needs to be restated that any approach which is inhuman, resulting in a loss of dignity, will create a greater psychological impediment in the way of this programme. It is a programme of human development and must be handled in a humane way.

The other aspect of this programme is the need to increase the legislative support to its various functionaries, more particularly for those who may become victims of any possible rash medical treatment. This will restore the confidence of the people in the system. Until we restore confidence, it will not be possible to enthuse the mass of the people. The present crisis is not the crisis of policy nor of even political will, but one arising from the non-involvement of political functionaries in restoring the people's confidence in the programme of regulating population growth in their own interest and for restoring the dignity of the individual. Human dignity should be the central core of this programme. The resentment and demoralisation that set in because of the excesses during the Emergency were largely due to the fact that the dignity of the people was violated. This is a factor, therefore, which nobody should forget under any circumstances. Any over-doing or over-enthusiasm to achieve the level of performance at the cost of human dignity will imperil the very existence of this programme.

The following positive dimensions highlighted in the Tokyo declaration of Parliamentarians issued in March 1978 are relevant in this context. 'The programme of family welfare and family planning is in the interest of peace and humanity in order to improve the quality of life for families in developing countries particularly in rural areas and in urban disadvantaged poor.'

Books

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES IN FAMILY PLANNING by V.A. Pai Panandiker, R.N. Bishnoi and O.P. Sharma, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, October 1977.

INDIA'S POPULATION — ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND CONTROL (VOLUME II.) by Asok Mitra Abhinav Publications, New Delhi.

THE NEXT 200 YEARS by Herman Kahn, William Brown and Leon Martel, Vikas Publishing House.

THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT by K.S. Srikantan The Population Council, New York.

GOALS FOR MANKIND by Ervin Laszlo et al. A report to the Club of Rome, E.P. Dutton, New York.

THERE are various approaches that can be adopted to the problem of population growth in the develop-

ing countries depending upon mental sophistication, social indifference or human callousness. Some can refuse to accept its existence by referring to availability of land, density of ratio, the discovery of new and alternative sources of food and energy and so on. They can also draw considerable satisfaction reading the study made under the aegis of Hudson Institute by Herman Kahn, William Brown and Leon Martel, *The Next 200 Years*, which presents the problems of growth, development, food, energy, raw materials etc., in a rosy perspective, arguing that the rate of population will begin to decline during the next two hundred years and will level off at a point existing before the industrial revolution.

Or one can take the supercilious ideological approach and label the whole population problem as a stratagem of the former imperial powers to whip up hysteria at being out-numbered or swamped by the brown, black or yellow peril. On the other hand, those who are willing to face the current economic reality in the developing world quite rightly consider it as one of the gravest issues which neither the national or international efforts have succeeded in controlling, much less arresting. Every second ticking day and night adds new mouths to feed in large areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America, precisely

in those sections which are already doomed to exist at a degraded and sub-human level

Therefore, how strange it is to discover prognancy in the very first sentence of the Preface to a publication relating to a field study on Policy Implications of Incentives and Disincentives in Family Planning, by V A Pai Panandiker, R N Bishnoi and O.P. Sharma. The Preface begins, 'It is a rare research experience specially in social sciences where within the short span of few months that a study is completed, its findings become *dated*. This is precisely what has happened to our present study. When the Family Planning Foundation suggested a study of the policy implications of the incentives and disincentives of the New Population Policy in April 1976, it looked too premature to undertake the study. At the time we moved to do the field work, the States were still in the process of gearing themselves for the implementation of the new policy package. We conducted our field studies in the summer months of June-August 1976

'By the time we completed the first draft of the study in early March 1977 just before the 1977 Lok Sabha Elections, the political events had already overtaken the new population policy. The virtual rejection of the new policy package and the decision of the new government to convert the Family Planning into Family Welfare Programme and put the entire population programme on a voluntary basis, made our conclusions a matter of history. This was indeed an unusual experience and indicates the extent to which the family planning programme had become a political issue'

In fact, it seems to have become something more than an inter-party political issue. Otherwise what is one to make out of the statement of the former Prime Minister (October 15) wholly disowning the New Population Policy of April 1976 introduced then with so much drum beating. The PTI report reproduced in the national papers (October 16) states that the former Prime Minister said: 'Family Planning was not "my" (or our) policy at all. It was the policy of Dr Karan Singh, but nobody was blaming him. It was also the policy of the Maharashtra Government, but nobody was blaming it either,' Mrs Gandhi told the interviewer (The Hindi words used by Mrs Gandhi were *hamari neeti*, which can mean 'my policy' as well as 'our policy').

'Mrs Gandhi went on to add that "I was" (or, "we were") strongly opposed to that policy and it was a matter of record that there was a discussion in every policy . . '

'As a matter of interest if the head of the Cabinet disapproved of a policy ... which incidently as drafted originally is unexceptionable . why did the Cabinet not reject it?'

Incidentally, the above disclaimer also raises another interesting point of cabinet functioning. When an individual presents a policy paper and the

cabinet accepts it after discussion, does the responsibility for policy continue to be that of an individual member or collectively of the cabinet? The very fact that an attempt has been made to disown a policy demanded by the imperatives of the demographic situation, shows utter lack of understanding of the present situation and an appalling lack of awareness of the future dangers

In fact, one of the major tragedies of our country is that most of our leaders do not have either the time nor the will to read, nor the ability to read pertinent material. Otherwise, they would have functioned much more effectively in tackling problems when they earnestly wished to do so. For instance the Panandiker field study would have revealed to the serious reader certain measures which have, by experience, proved to be effective in curbing the growth of population in many developing countries. These are given below:

1. Spread of education among the population.
2. Participation of women in gainful employment outside the home
3. Abolition of or reduction in the economic value of child labour.
4. Reduction in infant mortality.
5. Restraint on early marriage.
6. Decline in traditional religious beliefs which support high fertility norms.
7. Attenuation of the extended family.
8. Adoption of social security measures like old age pension, unemployment relief, etc.
9. Provision of different birth control methods as alternative choices and as close to the homes of the people as possible.
10. Increase in the per capita income of the economically weaker sections of society.

Those who are seriously concerned with implementing population control policies would find most interesting the results of a survey about the methods adopted in family planning as detailed for instance by the table on the following page

It will be seen from the table that only three methods were adopted by the acceptors — the sterilization, the loop and the condom. Although some of them were aware of the pill as well, none had used it. Any other method than the three named above had also not been used by any acceptor. Sterilization was way ahead and towered over the other two methods used. 175 or 89.3 per cent of the acceptors had gone for sterilization, only 12 or 6.1 per cent for the IUD and 9 or 4.6 per cent for the condom. This is as was expected. With a high concentration of attention and

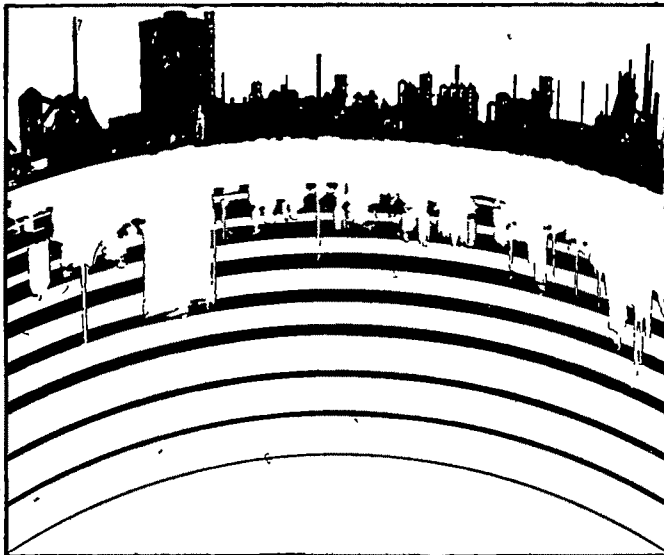
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Distribution of Acceptors by Method of Family Planning Adopted

State and District	Method		Adopted			
	Vasec- tomy	Tubec- tomy	IUD	Condom	Pill	Any other
<i>Biha</i>						
Gaya	24	10	—	1	—	—
Dhanbad	25	2	—	2	—	—
<i>M.P</i>						
Hoshanga- bad	9	11	1	1	—	—
Datia	10	9	3	2	—	—
<i>Punjab</i>						
Ropar	5	16	2	1	—	—
Amritsar	1	2	1	—	—	—
<i>U.P.</i>						
Allahabad	14	13	3	1	—	—
Rampur	12	12	2	1	—	—
Total	100	75	12	9	—	—

effort on sterilization and a neglect of the other methods, the result could not be any different

But, most important of all, the average reader might have learnt the global dimensions of the population problem. For, as the authors put it, never before in the history of the world has the population increase been at such a high rate as in the present half of the twentieth century. There is a wide consensus of opinion that the current level of growth cannot be sustained for long without serious detriment to the welfare of the people. The growth of the world population which, on an average, had been 0.5 per cent per annum in the nineteenth century increased to 0.8 per cent in the first half of this century, and further rose to an alarming 1.9 per cent per annum during the period 1951 to 1975. As of mid-year 1955, the world population stood at about 4 billion and at the current rate of growth is expected to rise to about 6.5 billion by the turn of the century.

In fact, in spite of all our efforts at family planning, it is amazing how ignorant we are about so many different aspects of the problem. This is crucially brought out by the remarks of Malcolm S. Adiseshiah in his Foreword to Asok Mitra's 2 Vol publication *India's Population*. Says he 'It reveals how much one does not know, how much the demographer does not know and how much the census and actuary does not know'. He might have added 'what our leaders do not know! and what our rulers do not know!'

This exceptionally valuable publication is primarily devoted to focussing attention on the demographic compulsions that will exert mounting pressures in

the political, social, economic and technological spheres. As the authors point out, hitherto, 'demographic pressures have operated on the political and economic areas in inverse proportion to social, cultural, economic and technological deprivations. But it is unlikely that they will long continue to do so. From now on, demographic pressures will tend to exert themselves in direct proportion to the deprivations that particular segments of the population will suffer from. It can certainly be argued that the limits to endurance of these pressures in our situation are still far away but they may be closer than one imagines.'

There is so much to learn for our family planners and policy makers that these two volumes should be compulsory reading material. However, a short review cannot do justice to such an eminently worthwhile publication except to quote some very relevant excerpts.

'The present picture of rural poverty is depressing, both because of the appallingly low levels of income, wealth and economic security for the majority of the rural population and because of the reduction of the staying power of the poor during the decade'

'Increase in population is no doubt one of the reasons of the absolute or proportionate increase of the poor within the rural population'

'On the whole, the instruments in the hands of the poor to work for their own betterment are fewer today than in the early fifties. The only demonstrable advantage the poor do have is their numerical strength, and when sterilization threatened even this nominal strength, the consequent alarm and desperation became general and widespread'

'To the bulk of the population, plagued with low levels of income and deprivation of employment, nutrition, education and social welfare facilities, the compulsory termination of addition to the family after second or third child is fraught with legitimate fears. Even as recently as 1966-67, a man could expect at the age of 67 to see at best one son alive at current levels of mortality if he had 6.7 children'. Is it surprising that a large family norm is considered desirable?

The author explains succinctly why the vast majority of households in this country look upon a large family size as an asset. The reasons are (1) as means of acquiring more earners in the family each of whom will augment the total income of the family, however marginally, (2) as a means of sharing household chores and family enterprise from very young ages to release the adults to try for fuller employment and higher wages, (3) as a means of abundant caution against loss of family members through death which can come suddenly at all ages, particularly at infancy or at young ages, (4) as a means of sustenance, help and company in old age (5) as a means of emotional satisfaction in such stages of poverty, (6) as a benefit whose value is great but whose costs by way of maintenance, upbringing and education are hardly perceived at all, for a child can with a little luck start earning as early as 7 or 8.

Few people at current levels of poverty, in rural and urban areas, can afford to remain unemployed for even a whole week. There are times when child employment substitutes adult employment, e.g., in an agricultural family it is customary for the child to take on payment in kind for taking the cattle of farming families to graze. And so, increase in the size of the labour force, resulting from sustained population growth, has led to worksharing and in situations of acute want of adult employment, to family sustenance on child labour alone. It is difficult for a poor family, to whom an extra child is the only cheap capital asset that it can think of, to perceive (a) how a smaller family is going to improve its lot, because of the limited scope for improvement, (b) how less children will lead to greater savings for itself and for the nation, because there is little scope for saving through higher earnings, and (c) how fewer children can mean anything but a lessening of its strength in the struggle for existence. More children, especially sons, still mean a net inflow of wealth from children to parents over the lifetime.

'The message of family planning thus warrants a radical restructuring of the traditional Indian household economy which cannot be accomplished without a restructuring of the national economy. This is the unresolved problem that the programme of family planning faces today and will face for an indefinite length of time until work is at last assured to every adult on level, at the least, of remuneration, health and comfort envisaged by the late Pitamber Pant. Large scale forcible attempts to reverse current perceptions, without adequate and concurrent preparation through persuasive communication and economic policy, may even jeopardise the basis of household enterprise in India on which so much of the stability of the economy and the social fabric rests. Into this social fabric are woven traditionally nurtured attitudes towards children and the sacredness of living and labouring for children. Labour in the Indian household acquires its relevance and legitimacy mainly as an imperative to support children and see them grow. If this main purpose is taken away, the *raison d'être* of household economy at the micro level virtually disappears unless other group or corporate ideals of a more material, social or collective, economic and political nature, dedicated to the production of a different set of social and economic goods than children, are substituted speedily enough.'

Asok Mitra's arguments are supplemented in a very technical monograph of K.S. Srikantan, *The Family Planning Programme in the Socio-economic Context*, published by the Population Council, New York. Although this monograph covers several countries in East and Southeast Asia common indicators are used. In the case of India, 60 indicators, 29 programme inputs, 16 socio-economic and 15 programme outputs were analysed for the 15 major States of India. A suitable model was formulated, and the intercorrelation matrix was interpreted in terms of the path and regression methods. In spite of data limitations and the cross-sectional nature of the

analysis, some broad conclusions can be drawn from it.

The analysis suggests that 'the success of family planning programmes, that is, the contraceptives now offered and the delivery system for their distribution, is primarily dependent on two aspects of the socio-economic context: the demand for such services and the infrastructural facilities necessary for their distribution. Therefore, programmes that offer a new contraceptive or utilize a delivery system more adapted to existing socio-economic conditions would constitute a major breakthrough. Such a breakthrough would enable successful adaptation of family planning programmes to suit the socio-economic context. Innovative experimentation is needed with such methods as distribution of condoms by mail or at village stores, paramedical prescription and non-medical resupply of pills, and camps and mobile clinics, to determine their viability under existing social and economic conditions.'

What is of greater import is that Srikantan feels that India's population may exceed that of China by the year 2000 because the latter has been more successful in reducing its birth rate. Hence, says he, 'what happens to India's population between now and the year 2000 will determine to a considerable extent the size of the world population and its growth rate.'

This contrasts completely with the viewpoint of Herman Kahn et al who deliberately challenge the pessimistic viewpoints. In a section dealing with the special problem of India, they say that India's population which is expected to reach one billion by the year 2000 represents roughly half of the world's food problem. But India's agricultural sector shows a considerable potential for greater food output. When compared today with China, Japan or Taiwan, Indian agriculture has a rather low degree of fertilizer use, a rather high ratio of arable land to population and relatively low yields. 'India's immediate potential for expansion depends rather on whether it can undertake the policies and programmes needed to use its resources effectively. It appears that only in the Punjab region has much organisation for effective production already taken place.' According to these experts the rapidly shifting government policies attended by administrative incompetence and corruption are at the root of the Indian malaise.

Since Kahn et al tend to challenge generally assumed propositions, it is surprising to find them analysing India's problems in the same terms as various others leaving a question mark about the solution. Otherwise the American Think Tank paints a rosy picture for the year 2000.

And what is the basis for this optimistic future? So far as population is concerned, they rely mostly on the theory of demographic transition which the authors quite candidly say is not really a hard and fast theory but a description of the historical experience.

So far as the future of population growth is concerned, as the arguments are based on the theory of Demographic transition, it might be useful to reproduce here its summarized version by Srikantan in the previously mentioned monograph.

This is how it goes.

1. In response to economic development and advances in sanitation and preventive medicine, the death rate begins declining slowly and then somewhat more rapidly in any count by undergoing industrialization and economic development.

2. The response of the birth rate lags behind.

3. This differential response between birth and death rates leads to higher rates of natural increase and produces what is sometimes referred to as a 'population explosion'.

4. Finally, with rising living standards, industrialization, and modernization, the birth rate also responds to development and begins declining rapidly.

5. This brings the birth and death rates once more into balance and the population growth declines.

6. The duration of the whole cycle, of course, depends on how long it takes for the birth and death rates to stabilize at a new, lower level.

However, this theory is not sufficiently refined as there are unknowns regarding the length of the cycle. Therefore what seems to be a more useful tool for the purpose in hand is what is called the Threshold Hypothesis which attempts to link the demographic transition with concurrent or preceding social change and economic development. According to the Population Bulletin of the United Nations No. 7 1063, 'In a developing country, the fertility is initially high. Improving economic and social conditions are likely to have little if any effect on fertility until a certain economic and social level is reached, but once that level is achieved, fertility is likely to enter a decided decline, and to continue downward until it is again stabilized on a much lower plane'.

Defining the hypothesis in three simple propositions would be something like this:

1. In temporal terms, a regime of fluctuating 'high' natality is replaced by one of declining natality at some point in the demographic history of the country. This again may be replaced at the latter stage by another regime of fluctuating 'low' natality.

2. Decline in natality is associated with decline in mortality and changes in values, norms, and socio-economic institutions.

3. Decline in natality is triggered off initially when one or more of the associated variables reach certain threshold values.

This theory holds the promise of escape from inevitable doom inherent in the Malthusian theory of population increasing by geometric progression, whilst the resources increase by arithmetic progression — thus leading to an impossible situation. If it is any consolation, India can take heart from the fact that its problems are not its alone but that of humanity in general. Therefore, as the latest report to the Club of Rome points out in *Goals for Mankind*, in fact, in a matter of a very few years, with great perception and in unexpectedly large numbers, ordinary men and women throughout the world have become conscious that enormous dangers are hanging over the heads of all peoples and nations, irrespective of their economy, geography, technological prowess or their ideology, and that the marvelous promise inherent in this age is being frittered away, because our generation has failed to develop the understanding, the vision, and the willpower required to live in consonance with it. All over the world concerned individuals and groups of citizens want to know more, and do more, and are prepared to strive and make sacrifices to ensure a more durable society and a future fit for succeeding generations. Many of them are willing to overcome the present fatal divisions that tear mankind apart and to stretch out their hands to potential or erstwhile adversaries, but they are confused and have yet to detect what actually are the basic interests they have in common, what attainable objectives they should pursue jointly.

Even if erstwhile adversaries stretch their hands pursuing jointly desirable objectives like finding adequate supplies of food, energy, raw materials — there will remain the problem of land because that is a finite resource. Even if space colonisation is realised the majority of humans will continue to be earth-centred for whom the problem of existence will continue to be beset with imponderables even if there are declining trends in population growths. Therefore, neither blinkers nor rose tinted glasses will dismiss the Malthusian spectre that is still hovering above the space-ship earth.

Rudolf Gyan de Mello

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE SEARCH FOR SELECTIVE INTERVENTION,

Edited by Ronald G. Ridker

POPULATION AND PLANNING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS by B. Maxwell Stamper

DURING the sixties, the world population started to increase at a rapid rate. This was mainly contributed by the third world countries. The phenomenon was noted by sociologists some of whom described it in alarming terms. The population explosion, they stated, would endanger human welfare. The poor countries in particular were under threat. Their efforts at economic advancement will be swamped by the pressure of their expanding population. Strident advice was beamed to these countries that their

salvation from the degradation of poverty lay in their achieving early and drastic reduction of their fertility. Matching this advice were generous offers of aid by affluent countries to set up wide-spread family planning and contraceptive services. Reduction of birth rates was given as the primary objective, the panacea that would open up the avenues of socio-economic developments. Did this vehement advice and generous offers of aid arise from altruism or was it the result of a calculated ploy?

The World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1974 reviewed the population problems and particularly those of the poor countries were analysed and it was conceded that rapid population growth vitiated economic development. However, the two factors were interlinked and the efforts at solution were aimed at both simultaneously, and not exclusively.

The two books under review take the cue from the discussions aired at the Bucharest Conference and the World Plan of Action formulated therein. The first book edited by Ridker deals with two issues that were most commonly advocated at the Conference for reducing the population growth of the poor countries, viz, a more rapid economic growth and more effective family planning programmes. The first to create the desire for small families, the second to provide the means. The book contains essays by individual authors. The socio-economic factor is hypothesized as having an influence on fertility which may be amenable to changes by policy manipulation. Each factor is examined for its determinant effect on fertility, further researches on the topic are indicated and the feasibility of policy interventions discussed.

All the possible determinant factors are not covered. The selected ones are those that have a high potential for creating environmental changes within which marital and parental decisions lead to small families compatible with other goals like economic development, political stability and individual freedom of choice. The correlation of the discussed factors and fertility are not straight equations but devious and complex.

For example, the one on 'Income, Wealth and Their Distribution' shows in analysis, that the increase of income in the short run may stimulate fertility. Again, the income received in a particular year may not have any significant effect on fertility but the full income that a couple expects to receive over its life time may have a notable impact. The per capita national average again is no indicator for assessing its influence. The major percentage of an increase in GNP in a developing economy in the beginning is siphoned off by an elite minority and its benefits hardly trickle down to the larger mass of the poor in that society and, hence, it has no influence on their fertility. If economic development is to be used as a tool to influence general fertility, the equitable distribution of the wealth created must also be ensured.

The focus of these essays is on the poor countries that may have a population problem and are actively trying to do something about it. The subject matter is treated on broad generalities and needs to be reinforced with further local in-depth studies and operational researches. The chosen factors and associated policy implications are presented in isolation for convenience of discussion. However, it must be noted that a package of a group of closely related and mutually reinforcing changes are likely to be much more effective than a piece-meal approach.

The second book by Stamper also takes the theme of population and development as spelled out in the World Plan of Action on the population problem. It provides a quick and brief overview of the population component of the development plans during the seventies of 60 countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Of these only the plans of one country, the Argentina, articulates a pro-natalist policy.

The study points out that there is a dearth of demographic data in many of the development plans. This may be due to lack of relevant data available or there may be lack of appreciation of its value by the planners. The countries that make more extensive use of demographic data tend to recognise more population problems. The study classifies the population problems in 10 categories, their explicit recognition in the development plan of a country reflects more so the perception of the planners rather than the actual problems that may be prevalent in that country.

Twenty-two of the countries studied neither recognise that they have population problems nor include population policies in their plans. Twelve recognise that they have population problems but have no population policies. The remaining both recognise their population problems and include population policies in their plans. However, in this last group there is a wide range both in perception of the problems and in the formulation of relevant policies.

The book is organised in two parts. In part one the findings are categorised into 3 major areas of analysis — utilisation of demographic data, recognition of population problems and dimensions of population policies. The second part reviews each of the 60 development plans studied. The analysis of each plan describes the demographic data used, the problems recognised and the policies proposed. In recent years there has been an explosion of books on population of varying range and merit. The two reviewed are useful additions to the library shelf of any student of the subject. It is interesting to note that much of the literature produced on population is oriented to the poor and developing countries and contributed by scholars from affluent countries. Obviously they have the advantage of both means and opportunity.

Dipak Bhatia

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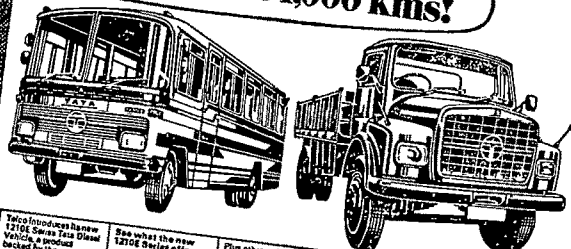
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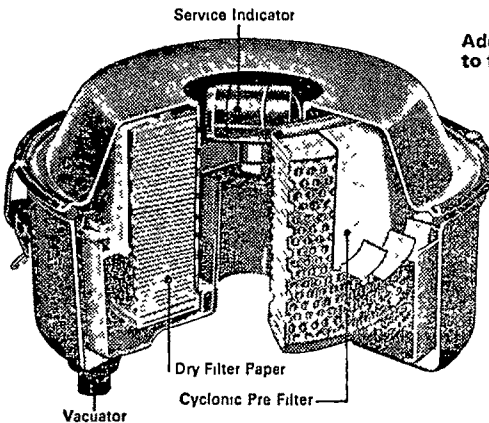
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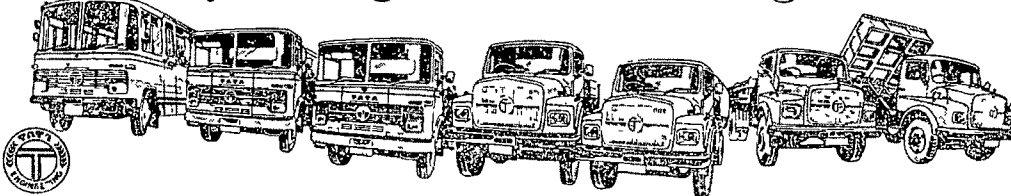
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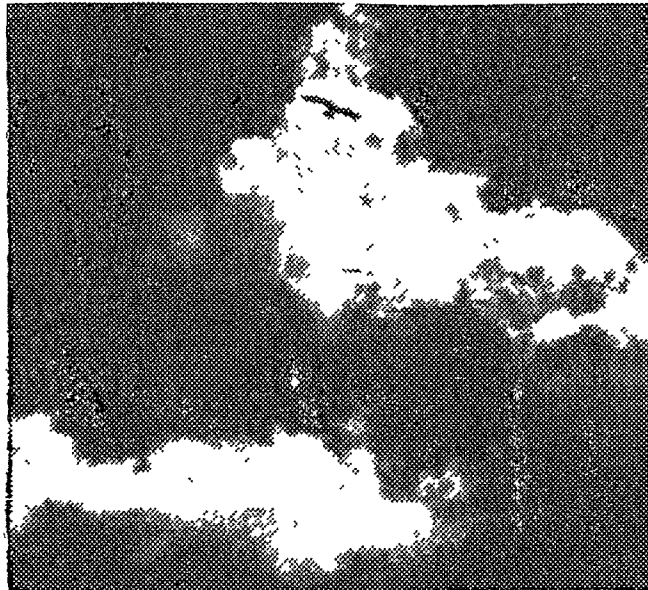
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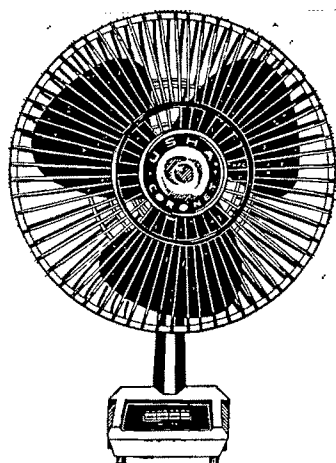


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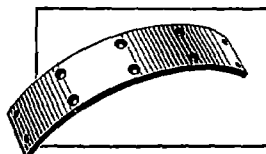


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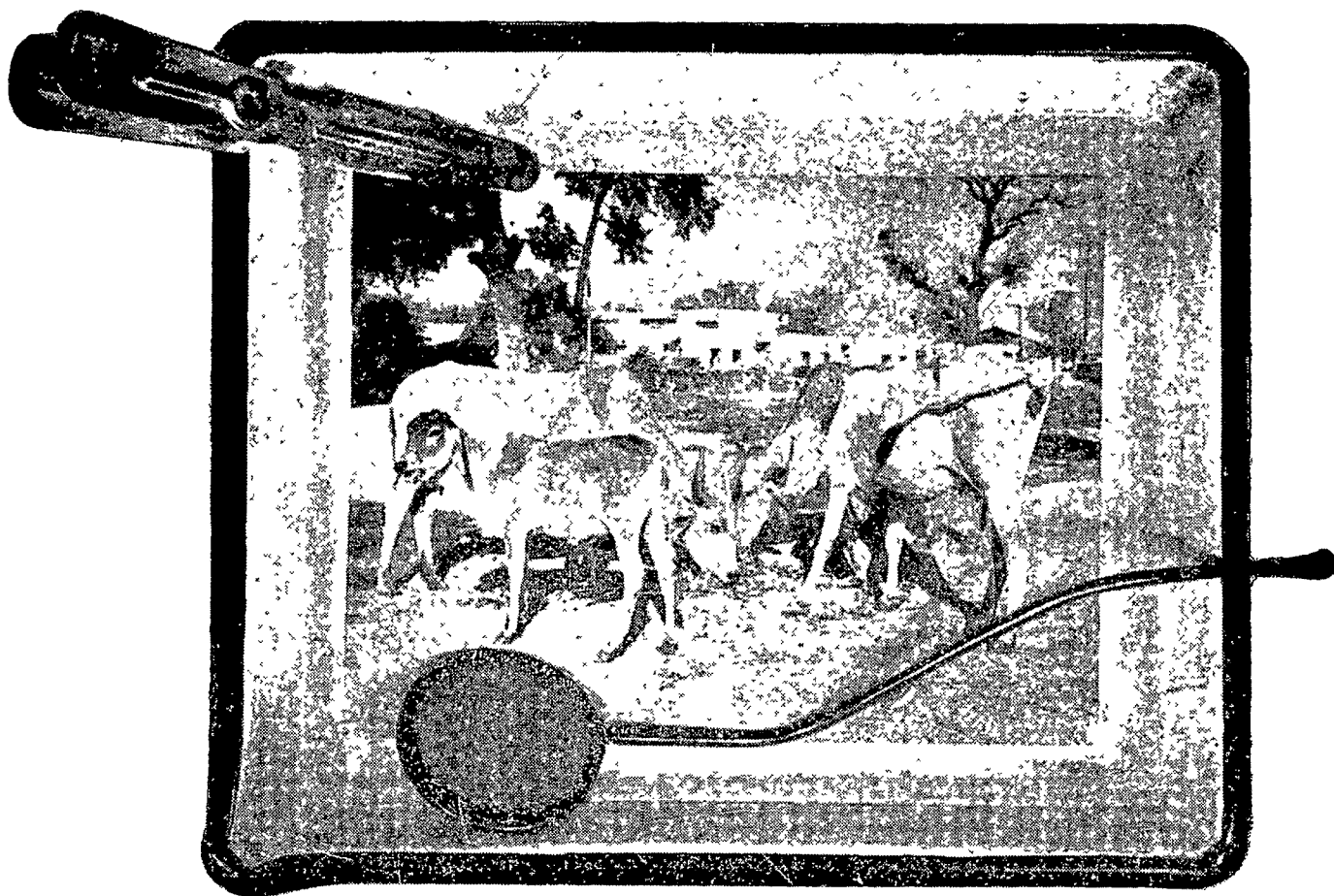


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ANOTHER TV

a reportage on
the experiences of
the space applications centre

participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of
the issues involved

THE CRUCIAL DECISION

Yash Pal, Director, Space
Applications Centre (SAC) Ahmedabad

A SYSTEM APPROACH

Kiran Karnik, Co-Chairman, Project
and Planning Group, SAC

PARTICIPATORY SOFTWARE

E.V. Chitnis, Chairman, Software
System Group, SAC

CASE STUDIES

K. Vishwanath, Co-ordinator, Educational
Resources Cell, Software System Group, SAC

NO PRESCRIPTIONS, PLEASE!

H.T. Baradi, Producer, Kheda
Communication Project, Software
System Group, SAC

MODE OF OPERATION

S.R. Joshi, Scientist-in-charge, SITE Continuity
Research, Kheda Communication Project, Software
System Group, SAC

COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

Before TV was launched in Delhi, there was intense discussion about its role, purpose, content, audience. Government held a seminar, people warned against it being used as yet another 'middle class toy', and a very expensive one at that, there was much talk about community sets to be installed in large numbers in industrial and rural areas (the few that found their way there are seldom in working order), about TV bringing the 'community to itself' but, as is usual in India, all these mass of words were heaped into a large well of oblivion. TV went its merry course producing rather dubious quality entertainment for a greedy, urban middle class. New stations mushroomed, some in the early days like Srinagar so short of material that they were stuffed with old Bombay movies.

Despite all the jargonised chat, no one paid any attention to the soft ware, or to the hardware for the soft ware. Sixteen mm facilities remained as primitive as before, 'experts' talked about super eight, video, but no decision was ever taken. Now that we have the prospect of colour TV looming large in front of our eyes, at the cost of a vast fortune ostensibly to keep up with the contemporary technology across the seas, it might be worthwhile to stop a minute and take another look at what we have been piling into the box, and what are the effects if any.

Evaluation reports certainly are suspect. All the earlier questions we asked ourselves about how TV could play a role in assisting our people in different ways, have long been forgotten by Doordarshan. It is a reflection of the deep schism in our society itself, the distance between the people and those who supposedly cater to their needs. Add to this a bureaucratic culture, structure, what have you, and the picture is complete.

There is a scramble to fill the screen with images that, apart from being as dreary as government PR handouts, become yet another excuse for piling up files, visual files, this time. If anything, standards both technically and content-wise, have fallen since TV first started. The lightness and humour of social commentaries and panel discussions are nowhere to be seen. Equipment, or the lack of it, processing facilities, raw stock plus the countless government proced-

ures and taboos, make it impossible for those outside the bureaucratic system to contribute programmes for the box. Payments are sometimes so thin that they can hardly be stretched over the costs without tearing apart.

No policy is discernible behind the jumble of images. This, in the normal course, would be welcome because a defined policy in government hands is sufficient to snuff out any creativity. However, TV was not introduced for creativity alone but for a purpose. It was, basically, to be a tool for change, so we wishfully thought, not a status quo refrigerator. And, in our country it was meant for those who had been denied access to other forms of communication. 'We', the urban educated know-alls would tell 'them', our helpless millions, how to improve and order their lives and all this from Doordarshan studios. So, when Doordarshan is not catering to the urban penchant for entertainment, it is delivering little smug lectures to the 'people', rural, industrial, all mixed up, with the Bombay movie standing out as the popular lowest common denominator.

Amidst all this confusion, the experience of Pij at the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad comes with a message to the Indian scene. The seriousness of approach, the humility, the capacity to assess both success and failure, the attempt to use TV in a vigilante role, guarding the rights of the totally helpless, giving strength where strength is needed, has at last proved that it is possible for TV to fulfil its role in our conditions. But, few have had a chance to see this material except for the people of Kheda district in Gujarat for whom these programmes have been made and to whom they are regularly beamed. If Doordarshan had thought it fit to show the Pij programmes through its TV channels, this could have acted as a catalyst for all future programming. Whether it is a ritual murder in a village, or the condition of bonded labour or how TV was able to force government action on a forgotten irrigation project, and how half inch video could simplify the entire process and how the cooperation of the peasants should be sought and can be got, the experience must be disseminated more widely. Since we can't see the images on the screen, we thought this excellent work should at least be recorded in the pages of SEMINAR.

The crucial decision

YASH PAL

OUR TV system was not set up. It evolved. And if we continue with it, the evolution will never be complete.

We are primarily a science and technology centre. We work at the frontiers of space science and technology. But we are also an applications group. Such a group can function in two ways. We can develop technological systems for potential applications. Or we can get involved emotionally, intellectually and experimentally with specific human, social and economic problems and work at their technological elements. We have chosen to go both ways. For many of us the second route has more meaning. That is why we got into SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) programming and into Kheda TV.

Institutions and organisations are normally expected to confine themselves to specific elements of a system. And so it should be, to a large extent. On the other hand, unless there are some people in the organisation who are concerned individually or collectively with the total chain, we are likely to end up, at best, with solutions in search of problems. Rules regarding 'allocation of business' constrain you to deal with technology, science, socio-economic problems, education and broadcasting in separate compartments. Coordination is supposed to be achieved through committees of administrators at the apex. This may work — how efficiently, we know — when we are dealing with well defined, frozen systems. When entirely new concepts are involved, this sectoral approach will only produce a conglomeration of incompatible elements.

These are generalisations, mostly post facto. Let me give some examples: they might illuminate the process through which we became what we are.

We made a lot of science programmes during SITE. Indeed, we

made practically all of them. This responsibility was rather easily given to us after all, weren't we the scientists and engineers in this experiment? Many of us had worked over the years in devising science curricula for school children. We had worked in public schools, municipal schools and in rural schools of Hoshangabad district. With this background and with dozens of M. Techs. and Science Ph.D's in our midst, we should have been brimming with self-confidence in respect of this responsibility. I for one was very confused and very nervous. We had been to dozens of villages where TV sets would be installed. We knew we would be dealing with one or two teacher schools, often with three or four classes in a single class room. We would have to reach children whose ages would vary between 6 and 12. There would be no apparatus nor any kits of the type we were able to use while engaged in curriculum development.

How to anchor our programmes? How to provide a thread through a random selection of topics? Should it be a random selection of topics? What topics? All this questioning brought us face to face with another fundamental question: must valid teaching of science in our villages wait for the establishment of the 'infrastructure' usually associated with science teaching in urban areas, or in foreign countries? The more we thought about this question, the more we became convinced that for science to be an integral, organic part of one's conscious world, it is essential to see its working in the familiar world of things around not in an artificial setting of artifacts during the 'science period'—a set of artifacts which, in any case, we could not provide. We went on to generalise that learning of science in developing countries has not led to the development of a 'scientific temper' precisely because of the impression created that science resides only in an unfamiliar, alien environment,

and has little bearing on the way we look at the world around us.

It is through intense discussions and seminars of this type that we came to formulate our 'credo' for science programmes:

'To make children realise that science is everywhere, and that through the method of science we can explain, understand and manipulate our environment'

After this bit of clarity, we felt liberated. We were also overwhelmed. It was clear that to convert this credo to a set of programmes would be a job not to be left to producers, or scientists or educationists alone. We definitely needed help.

In a series of continuing seminars with scientists, science educationists, psychologists, producers and communication researchers, we started working out a series of briefs for various possible programmes. Simultaneously, we wrote to dozens of people in the country, and some special ones outside, explaining our credo and requesting for briefs. We received excellent response, some valuable 'briefs' and a lot of good philosophy. The support of some people who mattered was exhilarating at this time.

We found it easier to recruit young producers in Bombay. We also had contacts with several enthusiastic science educators in that city. On top of it, when Madhuriben Shah, the then Education Officer of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, offered us some rent-free accommodation we decided to set up a small TV studio right opposite Grant Road Station in the heart of Bombay.

Collaborative arrangements were worked out with the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, the Bombay Association for Science Education, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, St. Xavier's College, Sophia College, IIT Kanpur, and the V. A. Sarabhai Community Science Centre, Ahmedabad. Sets of briefs were assigned to various individuals, who worked in a team mode with assigned producers all through

the conception, scripting and production phases of the programme.

Our 'tiniest studio in the world', with only a single video-tape recorder was also the busiest studio in the world. Many of our producers did their preparatory work in corridors and cafeterias of the TIFR or offices of their collaborators. We received cooperation from many in the communication field, including Dina Pathak, Tarla Mehta, Manmohan Kishan, Sathya and Shyam Benegal. A full time communication researcher in the studio pre-tested some of the programmes and kept the pace of information input in the programmes within bounds.

By and large, two years of the Bombay Science Programme effort was an exciting period for all participants. A new approach to science programming was initiated and many of the 160 ten minute programmes produced were truly first rate. Concern was with concepts, science was discovered in the kitchen, in the village pond, amongst plants and trees, birds, fish and animals. It was not only a new experiment in making TV programmes on science, it was also a new trail in the handling of science at elementary level. Programming for SITE was just a meaningful beginning in this direction.

When SITE ended, we had to close down the Bombay studio, because we were asked to get out of the building we were using, no one placed a continuing demand for the science programmes, no one came forward to support this activity. The scientists and producers in the team mourned the death of an institution, many of us still do. It was not just the re-location of a few pieces of hardware, it was also the breaking of valence bonds between many who, coming from a variety of organisations, had joined hands to do something significant though outside their normal 'allocation of business'. What was possible during the charged atmosphere of SITE was found to be unacceptable when life became normal.

Our involvement with Kheda programming has been somewhat more substantial and has lasted much longer. Some of the experiences in

this regard are described by my colleagues in the subsequent papers. In my view, the most important asset of the Kheda TV experiment has been that it was created ab-initio by people who were not experts in conventional TV technology or its organisational and programming culture. We started with engineers who were capable of designing and building TV systems, not just buying them. We had managers who had grown up handling research projects. We put together a team of young producers and media men, not because of their long experience of working on a TV console, but because of their enthusiasm to identify with rural problems. With this mix it became possible to develop an awareness that we had to discover and invent a new system, that 'rural television for India' was something on which no one had worked seriously, not even communication experts from abroad. We were not cocky. Indeed, many a times we were very much on the defensive because of our lack of experience.

On the other hand, we had a culture of 'demystifying' everything which made it easier for anyone to ask 'why this, why not that?' If professionals told us that half inch recorders could not record a professional quality picture, one of us was to ask 'isn't the acceptable band sure width of a conventional receiver smaller than what a half inch tape can record?' It is usual in television to have pretty continuity announcers linking various programmes telecast during the evening—often mouthing inanities which no one listens to. Someone asked, 'why was this essential, particularly when we did not have so many pretty announcers available?'

With a mix of social scientists, managers, programme producers, scientists and engineers, it was inevitable that many situations would arise which would be potentially capable of blowing the whole organisation apart. We made many organisation charts. We issued a lot of memoranda about modes of working. And we changed them an innumerable number of times. Everyone knew at all times that the way we were working was not permanent, that if it didn't fulfil its function, it would be changed. All programme

series went through an idea stage, a discussion stage, a scripting stage, making of prototypes, viewing of programmes, ruthless criticism, a lot of hot words and, sometimes, praise. Seminars were arranged at the drop of a hat, previewing sessions were held as often as the facilities allowed and, yet, there was need in this atmosphere of academic searching to get on with the job. Lateral thinking was encouraged but concentrated action was also demanded.

In a world of exploding communication possibilities, satellite communication (and satellite broadcasting) is one of the few exciting new technologies which does not discriminate against people living far from urban centres. Its reach is global. It does not require the pre-existence of a communication infrastructure. Anyone, living any place, on top of a mountain, in the middle of the forest, can be put in communication with anyone else. Therefore, *potentially* it is a technology which can be developed for preferential treatment to those sections of the population which normally only get the dregs of development, which first starts amongst the privileged in the urban centres. I said *potentially*, because it is also a technology which, having a large reach, can be used preferentially by the powerful to sprinkle down messages on those who are located in distant areas. It is also a technology which can be used for homogenisation, for indoctrination, and for the control of the minds of the many by a few. We believe that precisely this sort of situation is the one which demands early attention in terms of developing subsidiary technologies, organisational structures, and a culture, to ensure that the future works in a direction which is desirable.

Kheda was that valuable experiment within the experiment of SITE, which enabled us to pay attention to most of these questions. The very conception of the SITE experiment was a bold assertion that the global reach of satellite broadcasting should be primarily used for education and development in rural areas. The putting together of special dedicated studio and pro-

duction teams was a recognition of the fact that rural programming at a meaningful level cannot be done on a part time basis.

In spite of all this, we felt that mere reach may not be enough, that intimacy mattered, that all the relevant messages just cannot be generated very far from the receiving areas and that some of them must be created with the people, at locations where the problems are.

So, we set up a TV transmitter in the heart of the Kheda district, and set out to make the intimate component of the programming while the 'long reach' programme came from Delhi via the satellite. In the technical jargon of the time, the Pj transmitter was a 'limited re-broadcast transmitter'. The word 'limited' referred to the limited range of the transmitter. According to our present way of thinking, it should also be applied to the fraction of time it re-broadcasts a programme created a thousand kilometers away.

As becomes abundantly clear in several of the articles which follow, one of our primary successes in Kheda has been due to the technical innovations in our laboratories which enabled us to use very low cost, mobile and portable equipment in the villages and with the villagers. We believe that this technical development, and its practical demonstration, now makes it possible to change the entire complexion of television in this country and other countries with a physical and social configuration like ours. We believe that it is now possible to get away from the concept of massive, expensive, centralised, large studios, to a concept of mobile, low-cost programme making facilities, each of them two orders of magnitude cheaper than a large studio. We believe that such facilities can be provided in large numbers, not only to professional broadcasters, but also to others who have things to say, or to those who want to talk with each other; it is possible to generate a pattern of communication where many interact with many rather than a few trying to influence the many.

Once that happens, one will discover new modes of using this me-

dium as, for example, the non-broadcast use which has been described in Professor Chitnis' paper. We have here a possibility of using communication technology in an intimate milieu, with close kins and near neighbours, and the daily business of growing up, learning and living with local sounds and smells. Simultaneously, the satellite link-up can provide a window to the rest of the country and the world to ensure that we do not end up creating parochial cultures. We can have an inner-directed decentralised development programme which can be integrated with, and shared with, the rest of the country by occasionally hooking together with a satellite. That such a system is possible in the country, and can indeed be implemented in the country, has been demonstrated by Kheda. That it can lead to useful results has also been proved in Kheda. This, to my mind, is the most significant lesson to be learnt from this experience.

What will happen to the first rural television transmitter in the country? This only the future will tell. So far it has been possible to dedicate all programming to the people in the Kheda district in spite of the fact that we live in Ahmedabad and the radiated signal does spill over into the city. We understand that in the next plan there will be a high power television station in Ahmedabad which will probably also radiate to Kheda. It is possible that a decision might be taken at that time to close down the Kheda transmitter and to serve the Kheda district along with the Ahmedabad city with a high power transmitter. This may be put forth as an argument in favour of economy.

I am personally somewhat worried about this possibility because all experience shows that it is difficult for a set of producers to serve both the rural and urban populations simultaneously. So far we have been successful, in several years of operation, in running a transmission without a single commercial movie being telecast. After Ahmedabad also becomes a client of the high power transmitter, I doubt if this would be possible. We make valid objections to rural programmes for Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and

Rajasthan being produced in one place.

By the same token we should have a much stronger objection to programmes for the city of Jaipur and the villages around Jaipur being made in one place, or for the city of Ahmedabad and the rural district of Kheda being made in one place, because I believe that the rural areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have many more problems in common with each other than their urban areas have with their rural areas. The socio-economic problems, the administrative problems, problems relating to agriculture, to animal husbandry, to nutrition, to health, which pertain to the rural district of Kheda have much greater commonality with similar problems in Andhra Pradesh or Karnataka than the problems of Ahmedabad city or Hyderabad city have to the rural areas around them.

I am not advocating a rural urban dichotomy, but pointing out a fact of life. If one has 500 community receivers in the villages around a city and a hundred thousand television receivers in the city, if most of the vocal, influential, literate set owners, who can influence the programming through letters to newspapers and telephone calls to the station director reside in the city, it is unrealistic to expect that the programmes will cater to the requirements of the rural population. And the tragedy is that once a pattern is set, once you begin to have Hindi movies twice or three times a week, once you begin to have pop music programmes or whatever, the culture of programming would have been determined. Even the rural population would demand the same culture, the same pretty pictures, the same concern with extravaganzas and, after this happens, it would be a real uphill task to bring about any change.

Thus, while we stand at the beginning of a communication explosion, with INSAT coming in the beginning of 1981, we also stand at a critical juncture where the decisions we take will determine the pattern of communication in this country for a long time to come.

As is well known, India has decided to acquire a domestic commu-

nication satellite which will be in position in the first quarter of 1981. This satellite has a large capability for telecommunication, but also for television broadcast. No definite decisions have been taken yet about providing a ground segment or programming infrastructure for the television broadcast. Supposing we do not take any positive decisions soon, what will happen? Soon after the satellite comes in, the two broadcast transponders available will attract the attention of broadcasters and technologists and the easiest thing to do would be to use them first for linking the TV transmitters in all large cities with very little additional cost. This will immediately provide the capability for showing the Republic Day programme, for relaying speeches of political dignitaries, for showing cricket and hockey test matches, a movie a day from one station or another, magic shows, perhaps some music and dance festivals also.

All this will generate tremendous happiness at very little cost to the broadcasting organisation. Many well-to-do people in the cities and in the countryside would realise that by spending about ten thousand rupees on a special satellite receiver they can receive all these programmes in their homes. Thousands and thousands of such receivers would be purchased by the affluent, many of them by the rural rich. The specialised urban programmes including movies could be seen perhaps every day and pretty soon all the capability of these broadcast transponders, which in early good faith were meant to be for rural communication, would be saturated. And that would be the end of the use of INSAT for rural communication.

On the other hand, if we do make a decision, it is possible to set up a large number of low cost programme making facilities, it is possible to involve a whole lot of people right now to begin planning, designing and making meaningful programmes in the rural areas. It is possible even without broadcasting, in the process of making these programmes to start a communication movement in the rural areas.

If this really gets going, it wouldn't then matter a great deal whether the programmes were broadcast or not, however, in a realistic world the tapes could be sent to any up-link station and the reach of the two transponders on the satellite could be used in a meaningful way. Time sharing between various regions would require that the two broadcast transponders be dedicated almost entirely to rural communication, except for an occasional national hook-up. Of course, even the national hook-up is possible without encroaching on the capability of the broadcast transponders.

We sit at a juncture in the development of ideas and in the development of technology where positive steps taken at this time will determine crucially the direction in which we go. Unless those decisions get taken soon, the natural flow of events would take us to the scenario which I have earlier outlined, and that would be a tragedy of high magnitude. Technology has its direction, its natural vectors, along which it moves automatically but I strongly believe that it is possible to intervene, it is possible to invent subsidiary *organisational* and *technological* elements which will make it go in the direction we desire. There is need for positive action on this, now. The required subsidiary organisational and technological elements *have* been identified.

Kheda has been a great and relevant experience for all this. It has been a small attempt to invent a system for rural India. The blue prints for such a system could not have been imported from anywhere, could not have been conceived anywhere else. The experiment has been abundantly successful in the sense that many things have been learnt. One begins to have a feeling for what would work and what would not work. There have been deep technological, managerial and programming insights. I do hope that this rich experience will not become just a report to be consulted in years to come by academics, but that this experience will have a positive, definite influence on planning our future communication system.

A system approach

KIRAN KARNIK

BESIDES being the first rural TV station in the country, the Pij station (in Kheda district of Gujarat, about 60 kms from Ahmedabad) is unique in terms of the philosophy behind its installation and location. Worried about the centralisation inherent in the technology of satellite TV, 'technologists' of the space organisation looked for technological options that could not only reduce but would meaningfully complement the centralisation of a satellite TV system. What resulted was the 'integrated decentralisation' of the Kheda system linked to the satellite system through the earth station at Ahmedabad, it relayed during SITE the 'central' programmes that came via the satellite—but, it also relayed locally-made pro-

grammes, dealing with local issues in the local dialect.

Thus, one could focus on local issues without getting bogged down in the mire of pure parochialism, local cultural forms could not only be preserved, but could be enriched by exposure to other forms, and one could provide a window to the outside world without allowing the one-way gusts of cultural domination to have unfettered sway.

Another important underpinning of the Kheda system is the fact that it is not only meant to serve Kheda district (and *not* Ahmedabad city, where the signal is — unfortunately — received), but to serve *community* TV sets in the Kheda villages. Thus,

not only is one concerned with a rural audience, but with a community audience including those who cannot afford a radio, leave alone a TV set

Finally, responsibility for programme production did not lie only with Doordarshan, as is the case elsewhere in the country, but also with the Space Applications Centre of ISRO. Thus, the programmes bear the stamp of a different working culture, the result of a research-oriented, inter-disciplinary organisation with certain goals and values

Over three years of transmission has resulted in the accumulation of many experiences and lessons in many different fields. What follows is a selection of these, from the perspective of system management. 'Chatur Mota', a twice-a-week serial in the local (Charotari) dialect dealt with social problems like dowry, widow remarriage, etc., and was immensely popular with the audience. The producer's intention was to highlight the dominance and authoritarianism of the conservative Chatur, as head of the family, and to depict the growing challenge to him of younger, more enlightened youth. However, so realistic was Chatur, and so habituated were most people to this kind of dominance by traditional ideas, that the programme lulled rather than provoked, the form and presentation drowned the content; and instead of instigating a revolt against the Chatur Motas of the world, it only succeeded in further establishing their right to dominate and dictate. All these findings were conveyed by the social scientists working in close collaboration with the producers, and corroborated by the producer of the programme himself.

Further, the problems tackled in the serial — dowry, widow remarriage, etc., are basically the problems of the middle-class and not those of the poor. But, the programme was immensely popular and the villagers waited eagerly for each episode. A classic dilemma for media managers (ineffectiveness vs popularity). Had we not established a policy frame on the basis of a clear philosophy/ideology, one would have plumped for popularity and served up more and more inane but

popular programmes, as most media managers do

However, rather than drug the audience with such opiates—and permanently damage their sensitivities as has been done elsewhere—we decided to stop the series. What we did do was to distil out the essence of its popularity and get the same team to use this in a different series featuring the poorer classes and portraying their problems. Sceptics were surprised to see that the new series was as popular as the earlier one, while simultaneously creating a major stir on many burning issues (untouchability, minimum wages, cooperating to fight exploitation, etc)

One wonders to what extent more bureaucratic and politically-controlled structures would be free to stop 'popular' programmes, even when it is recognised that these are not only meaningless, but often contrary to stated media policies. Can the broadcast of 'Chaaya Geet' on TV be stopped? Can films which glorify superstition or dependence on fate be banned or even censored?

We, also, are subjected to continuous pressure from the urban-rich of Ahmedabad (where, as mentioned, the Pj programmes are received and seen) to broadcast 'Chaaya Geet' and the typical 'Bombay feature film'. The more 'knowledgeable' would, of course, like to see the soap-operas and action-dramas of American TV. We have been able to resist this pressure only because we are clear about our goals and the target audience (both are explicitly defined), and because we seem to be less amenable to political pressure than highly-centralised, hierarchical organisations with a 'Delhi-political' working culture.

The freedom to innovate, to deviate from 'established' procedures is especially important for a rural TV station. For example, unlike radio and other TV stations, Pj broadcasts did not begin at the same fixed time throughout the year: the starting time changed depending upon the season (earlier in winter, later in summer). The importance of this is obvious in a community-viewing situation, where most of the TV

viewers sit out in the open. Similarly, the need to take account of agricultural operations in setting both broadcast timings and durations needs to be recognised. In fact, during the peak season (e.g., harvesting) when everyone in the village—including women and children—are out in fields till late at night, it may be desirable to have no broadcasts at all in the evening. Also, when it is pouring all over the district, there is little point in broadcasting and expecting people to sit in the rain and watch TV (one should mention, though, that on many occasions villagers have stood in the rain, sheltered by leaky umbrellas and watched the TV programmes—a compliment to the programmes, or a telling commentary on the lack of facilities for any other activity). On such occasions it may be more appropriate to provide a few minutes of weather information, flood or storm warnings, protective measures for humans/cattle/crops, and then close down the transmission. Such decisions, of course, would require the delegation of complete authority to the local station, and the flexibility to make changes.

In working on the 'frontier of the permissible' and indulging in 'planned brinkmanship', one is involved in a high-risk, high-stakes game, requiring difficult decisions. A series of investigative reporting programmes indicated blatant and illegal discrimination against the Harijans in a particular village. The next time our production team went there, no Harijan would speak to them—a result of economic and even physical threats to the Harijans by the landlords, we were secretly informed. One Harijan youth was willing to speak up, but his father pleaded with the production team not to record him or else he would lose his job and be beaten up.

Knowing from past experience that these were far from empty threats, should the production team shoot or pack up? Is it proper to pander to one's conscience at the cost of someone's livelihood? Conversely, is it fair to refuse to ignite the spark that may start a revolution just because one individual may suffer? Such questions torment the producers and demand an answer.

from the management, an answer that, while based on the overall philosophy and objectives, cannot ignore the reality on the ground

What did we do? In classical management style, a 'work around' plan was evolved. This called for recording the real-life, factual situation up to the maximum possible 'safe' point. Beyond this, the factual situation would be presented as 'fictional' drama. The classic formula-film approach of trying to portray fantasy as reality was thus reversed to create illusion out of reality. The creation of this 'false illusion' required greater effort and ingenuity on the part of the producers, and finally a variety of vehicles were used to convey it: drama, puppets, traditional folk-forms (especially *Bhava*), satirical skits, etc. Some of these forms were also used to say things that neither real-life villagers nor actors could have got away with.

For example, a series of programmes ('Hun Haan') featuring a man and a donkey — ego and alter-ego — questioned basic beliefs through questions and jibes by the donkey. The donkey could, for instance, ask Harijans why they should at all believe in a God who seems so grossly unfair; could point out the contradictions inherent in a hypocritical society, he could state that Manu — the creator of the caste system — was only a human being, and he could all the time poke fun at the foibles of man. The extensive (largely successful) use of folk-forms to convey developmental messages and to arouse the apathetic rural poor, and the creation of the genre of false illusion are probably two of the most significant original contributions of Pij to Indian TV.

Responding quickly to a changing environment has been mentioned earlier as one of the important organisational facets of Pij. The production of children's programmes is a good example of this. When transmission first began, not too much thought was given to children, since this would be only an evening transmission and not directed to schools. As a result, in the first month of transmission (August 1975) only about 4% of the programmes were aimed at children. However, researchers

and producers soon confirmed from the field that the biggest proportion (about 50%) of the audience and the most regular was children — not adult males, as had been expected. Accordingly, the Programme Plan was quickly altered and a special effort mounted to produce meaningful programmes for children. As a result, in October 1975 the proportion of children's programmes was 12.6%, climbing to over 20% in December 1975 and around 30% in the period April-July 1976, up to which period very detailed statistics on programme transmission were maintained as a part of the SITE studies.

The finding that children were the 'prime audience,' also led to considerable effort and thinking as to what type of programmes should be made for them. After numerous discussions and many typical urbanised social-worker suggestions as to the main problems (e.g., the main problem is language—the village children use foul language, the children wear tattered clothes and no shoes, children should be taught to obey their elders, etc.), it was finally decided to work on the theme of self-reliance, i.e., reliance on oneself.

This was with a view to tackling the serious problem of dependence (on God, government or the land owner) that seemed to grow as the children grew. However, detailed planning in terms of sub-goals, messages etc., indicated that this would need hundreds — if not thousands — of programmes to even make some dent. Therefore, a more limited objective was selected: to increase the motivation to improvise, given the realities and constraints of their existing environment.

The mode of production adopted for this series was unique. Production was the responsibility of a *team* that included a content-expert (a child psychologist) and a formative researcher besides the producer, scriptwriter, etc. The objective was first broken down into sub-objectives and goals, and these were then split into individual programme themes. The approach for each programme was discussed by the team before the scriptwriter wrote the script. This was again discussed by the team from the point of view of content,

information overload, production aspects, etc., and was then pre-tested on village children.

After appropriate modifications based on the pre-testing, the programme was produced and pre-tested on the children using a portable video tape recorder for playback in the village. If necessary, it was modified, and then transmitted. During transmission, social researchers stationed in villages provided feedback on audience reaction, etc., as inputs for future programmes. Finally the overall impact of the whole series (about 25 programmes) was studied. This intensive mode of working seems to have paid rich dividends, judging from the very promising results indicated by research on the impact.

This mode of working is, of course, more resource-consuming than, for example, putting a dancer before the camera in a studio and recording for half an hour or one hour. But, the benefits are obviously far greater and such comparisons have no meaning. On the other hand, a more serious resource management problem *does* exist in that such intensive working takes away the producer from the studio floor for an extended period of time: for this period, one is really making do with one less producer. In an operational situation, this certainly creates problems in terms of having sufficient production available for transmission.

However, once the initial planning and testing has been done, production in this mode, we found, is as fast or faster than any other mode. It proved to be rather like developing a new product (which takes a lot of time and effort, involving testing, trial and error approaches) and then putting it on the production line (where the item can then be almost mass produced). A partial solution is, therefore, to phase this planning and conception period for different series in such a manner that only one or two producers at a time are in this phase while the rest are at the 'mass production' stage.

The series also provided invaluable experience in managing such close, intensive interaction (often with a lot of friction) within an inter-

disciplinary team. A similar experience was available from a different environment — the production of science programmes for SITE, again in a team-mode, at our mini-studio in Bombay. Comparing and analysing these, many lessons were learnt, especially about producer-researcher interaction. Among the important ones

— Production of programmes in a team-mode is possible even in an operational situation. However, full-time, dedicated researchers are a *must* for proper formative research. The content-expert could work part-time, but familiarity with the medium is a very desirable attribute. Both researchers and content-experts should be oriented to being a 'part of the team' and not independent critics.

— Research should not (and cannot) be forced on producers. However, it is possible to build a system that facilitates and encourages researcher-producer interaction. Producers themselves can be — and often are — their own researchers. The researcher should play a supportive, service role and not a domineering one in the team mode, the producer is the captain of the team.

— Tight time-schedules and deadlines can, given the right system, act as a spur rather than a hindrance to better research inputs and programmes. However, in an operational situation, not all programmes can be produced with the same level of intensive teamwork.

— 'Over-specification' of content by the researcher and content expert leads to scripts without 'spark' and dull programmes that fall flat. Holding audience attention is the first requirement of any programme.

— Close interaction in a team-mode inevitably involves 'transgressions' from one's field of expertise into that of another. The secret of success lies in permitting such crossing of boundaries without in any way questioning the professionalism of others or compromising one's own.

Like most lessons, these have been learned the hard and difficult way, mainly through mistakes. While they relate to a specific environment and organisational structure, they are probably broadly applicable to most institutions. Their implementation does, however, require a certain kind of structure and management style.

Not surprisingly, there were some problems in the producer-engineer interactions too. While it is next to impossible to end the day-to-day disputes in an operational studio, we were able to promote some extremely fruitful and positive interaction on another plane. It began out of the need to produce a daily, topical 5-10 minute programme called 'Vat Tamari' (Your Story). As envisaged in our Programme Plan, this was to be a field-based production aimed at promoting vertical (villager to official and vice-versa) and horizontal (villager to villager) communication. The idea was to portray the joys, sorrows, successes and problems of the Kheda villagers and whenever appropriate, to record the response of the officials to their problems: a combination of communication and confrontation.

The programme succeeded beyond our expectations, mainly because the production team could go to any village (in waist-deep water on two occasions), record the villagers' views and transmit on the same day. This mobility and speed was made possible by the technological innovation of adapting and using small, portable, half inch video tape recorders instead of film cameras. Since we did not have film processing facilities, it would have been impossible, in any case, for the producer to make a daily, topical programme on film. He posed this problem to the engineers who, being R & D engineers rather than merely equipment operators, looked on this as a challenge. The continuing close interaction between the production staff and engineers finally resulted in modifying and adopting the 'amateur' half inch machine for professional use, and meeting all the requirements of the producer.

Apart from mobility and topicality, and the consequent programme

impact, this technological innovation resulted in an approximate saving of over Rs 2 lakhs in a single year. It also led on to further work in the field of low cost production equipment and, as a result, know-how has now been developed at the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad for all the basic equipment (excluding video tape recorders) required for programme production. This can help reduce the cost of a production set-up from a few crores (for the large studios like Bombay) to a few lakhs of rupees, making it possible to disperse and decentralize programme production. Thus, the organisational and philosophical impact of these developments probably outweighs the importance of the technical advances.

[Well before the production of programmes for Kheda was started, a series of discussions and meetings were held to formulate a Programme Plan. Writers, artistes, government officials, and a number of persons from Kheda district itself (including some from Amul, the co-operative milk movement) were involved besides producers, researchers and others from the Space Applications Centre. The discussions were based on two separate Programme Plans prepared in SAC on the basis of research (including Needs Assessment and Audience Profile studies), visits and background literature. Finally, an agreed Programme Plan emerged, the operational portion of which was a division of the weekly transmission schedule into specified programme categories, with a description of each.

While production proceeded for many months on the basis of this Programme Plan, a need was felt for a credo of some kind, a more precise definition of what we were trying to do. Earlier, we had formulated a credo for the SITE science programmes which read, in part, 'to make children realise that science is everywhere, and that their immediate environment can be questioned, understood, explained and manipulated by using the scientific method. The scientific method is more important than mere transfer of information.'

On a similar basis, a credo for Kheda was drawn up, and extracts are reproduced below,

'Development implies a break from the status quo, from inertia, it implies movement, change

' economic development cannot take place in isolation, it requires changes in the social system and in the attitude of the individual, it implies breaking away from bondages and oppression, and — most importantly — it necessitates an 'awakening' of the individual and his self-confidence

'In trying to accelerate development, communication can play a very major role. Our attempt in Kheda will be to use TV — and also to supplement it by other means — for development in the broadest meaning of the term. Concretely the attempt will be to

(i) Focus on the oppression and bondages in the present social and economic system in such a way as to heighten understanding,

(ii) Mobilise the community and the individual himself to break away from these bondages,

(iii) Promote self-reliance among the individuals and the community

— involving a reduction in apathy, in dependence on God or others,

— implying improvisation and an optimal use of local resources,

— necessitating a cooperative spirit and a willingness to take risks

'The prime target audience will invariably be the lower classes/castes who are the most oppressed and who need the catalytic input that will help them to help themselves'

Enunciating this philosophy was one thing, but putting it into practice proved rather difficult. Centuries of oppression have led many people to prefer the 'security' of serfdom to the risks of revolt

It is very well for Ibaruri to say that '... it is better to die on one's

feet than to live on one's knees.' but is it correct for righteous producers (who have neither died on their feet nor lived on their knees) to convey this message?

Introducing new agricultural practices via TV is good, and increases the yield but how many villagers own land? Better animal husbandry practices translate immediately into higher incomes, but how many villagers own cattle? A minimum Wages Act exists, but who will enforce it?

Questions such as these led us to different strategies, going well beyond mere production of TV programmes. For example, we produced a series of programmes on cottage industries, suitable for landless labourers and their families, involving little or no capital cost. Not satisfied with just the programme, we worked in collaboration with a training institute and mailed instruction manuals to all those interested, arranged for training, for bank loans, and finally for marketing. In the process, we learned a great deal about the pitfalls and problems of trying to get bureaucracies moving. We also learned about the difficulties involved in getting people to adopt such (seemingly) obviously beneficial trades

Another series aimed at highlighting the exploitation in the village social structure and bringing about awareness of this among the exploited. It also dealt with 'cascade exploitation', with even the poor exploiting the poorer. Interestingly, and surprisingly, we found that this theme could be best put across not by professionals, but by villagers playing themselves (again, the creation of a 'false illusion').

Other programmes used the medium to record and present the problem of the villagers to other villagers (by transmission) and to decision-makers (generally by playback from a video tape recorder), reactions of the decision-makers were then recorded and transmitted to the villagers, and the dialogue was continued until the problem was sorted out. While the programmes made villagers aware of the constraints on the decision-maker, their primary aim was to use the medium (speci-

ally its wide coverage and its powerful impact) to coax good administrators to take action, and to 'expose' any tardiness or inefficiency. This involved more than mere programme production, it required the producer to combine the functions of an investigative journalist and social activist with the normal ones of a producer

The management system that has been evolved to handle (and create) these various strategies is itself unique. While it has a tight information system — with daily, weekly and monthly reports, etc — and a detailed budgetary control system, it aims at encouraging creativity and stimulating initiative through flexibility. Thus, the budgetary control system has been devised so that once a programme is approved, the producer concerned has full authority — and responsibility — to operate the budget. Similarly, while a monthly schedule for studio recording and outdoor shooting is drawn up, this is treated as a flexible plan, with constant revisions to take care of problems, delays or sudden requirements.

The management system has also to encourage and ensure adequate social research and content-expertise inputs into the production. Since, as mentioned earlier, it is counter-productive to legislate such inputs, the function of management is to create an *environment* where interaction is promoted, and such inputs are given and utilised to the extent necessary for each programme. The importance of these inputs for developmental TV has now been established, and it has been part of our production philosophy to work in such a 'team-mode'

The most important part of the system is, however, the freedom and encouragement given to the conception of ideas for new programmes or for follow-up action. A crucial aspect of this is that personnel evaluation is not based merely on quantity of production; other factors like quality, relevance and originality are also considered. At the same time, there are checks and balances to ensure that freedom does not degenerate into licence. Much of this is achieved through discussion groups whose function it is to approve (or disap-

prove) ideas for new programmes, and to then 'clear' the scripts

The primary criterion for approval is whether the proposed programme/series is in line with the Kheda credo. After this, the proposal is considered from the point of view of priority of the subject, target audience, information content (overload), resource requirements (finance manpower and facilities), research requirements, and the need for support through other media/means. The relationship of the particular theme proposed to other on-going programmes is also considered. This is very necessary if one has to create a strong and coherent impact — an orchestra rather than a cacophony of diverse themes. What is being attempted is a *system approach* to the problem, involving primarily (but not only) TV.

The managerial function is, therefore, one of allowing and encouraging freedom and initiative *within* the defined policy framework (the credo), of orchestrating individual creativity into a coherent whole, of creating a flexible but planned system, for optimal use of available resources, and of fostering team-work without curbing individual initiative or creativity.

In addition, we have found it both desirable and necessary to forge close links with 'user departments' and extension agencies — e.g., the Departments of Agriculture, Health, Animal Husbandry at the State level, the Rural Broadcasting people (who maintain the Kheda community TV sets), the district and village-level extension services of these departments, and agencies such as Amul. In order to try and stimulate actual adoption of the TV-recommended practices, such linkages with field agencies are invaluable and essential. We have sought to create such links and generate closer collaboration and interaction with these agencies.

One of the other results has been, for example, the training of veterinarians from Amul in programme-production, so that the weekly animal husbandry programme is now made by them, using easy-to-handle, portable, low-cost video equipment

loaned to them by SAC. This sort of deep and complete involvement of extension agencies is necessary if rural TV is to really create a major impact on the village audience; not only can they help to ensure the relevance of the programme, but they can also integrate TV into their overall extension effort, thus making optimal use of its potentialities.

Much of the special nature and achievements of Pij has been possible only because of the unique work-environment in which this experiment is being carried out. This includes an organisational culture that promotes peer-level interaction and inter-disciplinary team work, a R & D setting in which creativity, innovation — and therefore diversity and deviation — are encouraged, a fairly decentralised and 'scientific' organisation, in which political interference is difficult and normally non-existent, a management culture that is highly value-oriented, and an organisation that, both by choice and necessity, must bend over backwards to establish its relevance, and its contribution to development. These *are* special characteristics and not all organisations have these attributes, however, given appropriate management, they *can* be duplicated.

Pij has proved that given the right organisational climate and talented, dedicated people, much can be achieved. It has shown that not only do such people exist, but they can also be 'grown' if the environment and nurturing is right. What is, therefore, required is a change — may be a revolution — in the organisation and management of such activities in India.

Pij, however, is far from being an unqualified success. It has certainly struck out a new and different path, one that 'was grassy and wanted wear' which was 'the one less travelled by'. It has created new uses for television, and new roles for producers. It has even created some change, at least a stir, among the audience. More than this, however, it has raised questions, *new* questions, about change, about social structure itself. We have no answers, no solutions. Our job is to make aware, to stimulate thought and action: solutions must emerge from the people.

Participatory software

E. V. CHITNIS

THE goals envisioned for rural development in the sixth plan are laudable. The outlay of thirty thousand crores is impressive. But is the system for 'delivering' the rural development equal to the task? The rural people, the potential beneficiaries, are conspicuously uninvolved. The risks are many. The need for establishing a communication system between the source and the receiver, so essential to keep checks and balances, has not received high priority. A small scale experience of a vigilant TV system in Kheda* which is capable of providing a feedback to the decision makers, may be useful.

It all started in the usual manner. A letter came to one of our producers from a village, which brought to

our notice the farmers' difficulties in getting canal water because the work of building the water channels had not been either completed or done properly. The villagers were thus incurring a loss because they were paying heavy interest on the loan raised to meet the expenses for the work. Apparently they had made several complaints which the administrative authorities had not heeded.

The producer wrote a letter to the State officials concerned inviting them to a meeting with the farmers in the village. Our producer and researchers were present and a frank dialogue between the farmers and the agriculture authorities was recorded. The authorities were on the defensive and agreed to do something soon. The programme recorded was telecast over the Pj transmitter and every one could see what the problem was. But, nothing happened. A couple of weeks later, a second programme was recorded in the village when the farmers bitterly complained that their problem still remained unsolved in spite of the assurance given earlier. They said that even though some officials had visited the village, it was

*Kheda TV covers 350 villages of Kheda district. There is a daily transmission of television programmes for one hour out of which half an hour programmes are made by Doordarshan and the remaining half an hour consisting of hardcore-agriculture, animal husbandry and health programmes and programmes related to economic and social change, are made by SAC producers, researchers, writers, very often in collaboration with subject experts from outside agencies and institutions.

not a satisfying visit and when some of the farmers visited the district authorities office in Nadiad they were not properly treated.

At this stage, SAC researchers had to take a visitor to some village to see the community TV. It so happened that the village chosen for the visitor was without electricity and he was therefore taken to this village as a contingency. The villagers were excited and told the researchers that the officials of the agricultural department had visited the village on that day and spoken to them with considerable politeness not experienced before. They felt that this was due to TV's support. Although nothing had really happened, their hopes had been aroused.

The Kheda producers and researchers kept in touch with the villagers and continued to probe the agriculture department officials at the district as well as at the State levels. Kheda TV also prepared a 20 minute programme on this problem for showing to a certain group in Delhi. It so happened that senior officials and members of the Gujarat Government had invited our producer for the making of a particular TV documentary. When our producer and researchers met them, they decided to show them the 20 minute documentary on the villagers' irrigation problem. It had an electrifying effect and that august assembly felt that something startling had come to their knowledge. Kheda TV then arranged a meeting of the aggrieved farmers with the highest concerned who immediately instructed the officials to take steps to solve the problem.

Later, when the officials visited the village, Kheda TV recorded the meeting and again transmitted the programme for the villagers. Almost six months after the first letter was received, the villagers informed our producer that their problem was now being tackled on a war footing and was expected to be solved soon. They were immensely grateful to Kheda TV for its support. Another visit to the village showed that this optimism was not so well founded and although the problem was being tackled, much remained to be done. However, the villagers certainly felt

that TV had done everything possible for them and was their ally.

In this particular case, TV played a catalytic role in a transmission as well as in a non-transmission mode. In the non-transmission mode it was a lobbyist, an activist who would not give up so easily. It kept up the pressure on the unheeding administration and also acted to boost the villagers' confidence by providing them access to the chambers of those who would listen to them sympathetically, decide, and direct the administrative authorities to act expeditiously. This was done in a very tactful manner so that both sides felt that Kheda TV was just the provider of a two way communication channel, nothing more. Kheda TV was also heartened to see that once given access to decision makers how convincingly and powerfully simple villagers could argue their case.

This is just one example. There are many others of vigilance keeping on behalf of the Kheda farmers. Cases of the farmers from Modaj who had an extremely bad season because of adulteration of 'certified' Bajra seed and of farmers incurring losses owing to a sharp fall in tobacco prices, come to mind immediately. On another occasion, when it discovered that the unsympathetic attitude of bankers and the banks' heart-breaking procedures were creating difficulties for the small farmers in getting loans for motors and pump sets, Kheda TV arranged a confrontation between the farmers and the bankers. This programme was shown to their bosses who saw to it that the loans were extended. The need for additional channels of communication to intervene effectively on behalf of the rural poor cannot be over-emphasized.

We have looked at television, technology of communication and development in an integrated manner. Our view has been that in a state of economic and social backwardness we must deploy the most powerful techniques at our disposal. We believe that the different agencies responsible for education, agriculture, health and animal husbandry could use television as an extension tool in their promotional efforts. If they really succeed in effectively

using television as an instrument for development, then one can regard the money spent on TV as an investment rather than as an overhead. To promote its large scale use by the agencies, we have made a conscious effort to bring down the cost of television equipment and production and endeavoured to demystify the television medium for potential users. One important innovation towards this is the development and adaptation of half-inch technology which was possible because SAC had a very viable and competent group of engineers who worked with producers in an R/D-cum-operational mode to make the half-inch portable machines suitable for television work.

Simultaneously, we made considerable efforts to get the user agencies interested in the portapacks for programme production. Among the agencies involved in discussion and exploration was AMUL. Initially we worked with them using their veterinarians as subject specialists for animal husbandry programmes. This went on for more than a year. Once in a while, we used to bring up the subject of their taking on the responsibility of programme making. But there was considerable hesitation on their part because they felt that TV was an expensive and difficult medium to handle. About a year ago they decided to take the plunge and this is what Dr. Gupta has to say about his experiences:

'With the good gesture and kind co-operation of the Space Applications Centre (SAC) at Ahmedabad, the Union has trained their own extension staff in operating the VTR system and in generating their own extension programmes. Some 4-5 programmes are now generated per month by the subject matter specialists of the Union, using video equipment and other allied facilities of SAC and these are telecast every week for imparting scientific animal husbandry education to the rural milk producers. The Union has found it quite economical and advantageous to generate extension programmes on the Video Tape Recording (VTR) system by their own trained staff due to certain obvious reasons.

'Firstly, the Union's subject matter specialists, being in constant and close touch with the rural producers,

know precisely as to what actual status of the know-how their milk producers already have and what further is required to advance that knowledge and the rate of progress

'Secondly, the subject matter specialists have also been trained by SAC, Ahmedabad, in all the component aspects of the VTR system such as theory of production extension programme, subject-selection, motivation, script writing, analysis of scripts, composition, framing and editing of shots and transfer techniques. These specialists have been advocating the essential scientific principles to the milk producers by mass contact in simple and popular language which help them to appreciate and understand the programmes. If these programmes are generated by those who are not quite aware of the clientele's latest background in technical know-how and do-how as well as the extent of finances, material resources and other facilities available within their actual reach, things may lead to confusion and may even tend to retard the rate of progress

'Thirdly, the Union's extension staff has won full confidence and faith of their milk producers since their recommendations have already produced fruitful results for them. Hence these programmes can be generated by the Union's staff at a faster rate and made quite realistic to the rural situations, in close collaboration with the village leadership

'Since August 1975, over 120 extension programmes on varied animal husbandry topics and sub-topics have been generated and shown to the rural masses through the TV medium. The same topic may often be repeated not only as a seasonal reminder but also to include various other aspects of the topic not covered previously. The above system has been found to be a vital component of the Union's extension systems as it is not only very effective and efficient but also saves much on man hours'

The recent SAC-study of Kheda TV impact covering areas of animal husbandry consistently indicates that in comparison to non television villages, TV villages have acquired considerably greater knowledge.

AMUL is looked upon as a field laboratory by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). AMUL's video experiences and insights will be used in other dairies being developed by NDDB in various places all over the country

Besides training user agencies experts in the techniques of production and related formative work, we have provided opportunities to imaginative and innovative students from institutions such as the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad and Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, for making full scale programmes

In the past three years, many NID students have helped us in various ways. One of them made some of the most beautiful puppets for our 'Hun ane Ha' series. A good deal of the popularity of the series was due to these lovable and very lively puppets. One of the principal characters, (Hun) was a donkey puppet. With his endearing 'donkey qualities' he became so popular with the Kheda TV-crowd that he regularly received invitations to marriage celebrations from the villagers. At the end of the series we held a puppet exhibition in the city. The puppets drew such large crowds that we had to extend the originally scheduled two day exhibition to a whole week

For one of the NID student's diploma projects, we provided portapacks, production crew, editing facility and guidance for formative work and production techniques. The idea was that the student-producer would design a small series of programmes with a definite goal for a given target audience. She decided to develop a children's series, after extensive discussions with her formative researcher and producer guides and visits to villages, spending considerable time with children and talking to their parents

The objective of the series was to bring out the creative ability inherent in children and to make parents recognise it. The selection of the cast, the format and the story was done by the student. There was no written script except a story about animals which a compere tells the participant-children, to make mud

toy-animals such as a lion, an elephant, etc., to demonstrate their creative ability. The children make the toy animals and communicate the story through the toys which they manipulate. In the next programme the same story is enacted by the children who assume the roles of different animals. The last programme was recorded in the midst of the participant-children and their parents after they were shown the first four programmes on a video monitor. The parents' responses were recorded

The programmes were telecast over Kheda television. Feedback was taken on all programmes and the results show that the audience felt that the series was shown to enable them to learn how to make mud toys and enact the story. It appeared that even after watching the series the parents and adults were ignorant about their children's creative abilities. They felt that except a few clever ones, their children could not be creative. Both parents and children lacked confidence to do anything independently. Many of them learnt from the series that there are several ways of enacting the story/play. To this extent the objective was realised.

Recently the student-producer defended her project work, successfully facing the evaluation panel on which we were invited members. After getting her diploma she decided to continue her association with us. She has taken up a new series, 'science and superstitions'.

In June, three FTII students spent six weeks at SAC. A few of their experiences and views are given below

'TV programme production in the SAC is an example of involved rural developmental communication where the emphasis is on making the audience aware of the means for self-improvement wherein hardcore programming places emphasis on agriculture, education, health, family welfare, science, etc., based on field research

'Our orientation began with an observation of a script committee meeting. The atmosphere of freedom which exists in the script committee for members to voice their opinions allows for a motivation towards an

involvement in the difficult task of research, and evaluation of programmes and future programme production.

'For the AV communicator, Kheda is a paradise. The constant interaction between the people and TV personnel has solved the problem of camera-consciousness and general curiosity which makes audio-visual programme production in many other parts of the country either very frustrating or near impossible. Besides this, the interaction has built up a mutual trust which helps fact-finding and problem solving.

'There have been some excellent programmes we have experienced, among which we can remember two on child-adult interaction in two formats, STEP is a step, the exploitation series, Nandu Indu (a children's series), Poochidiwalo Raja, one or two science programmes.

'One of the most revealing aspects of our work at SAC was the portapack. All outdoor programmes are recorded on the portapack. Our orientation into this light weight equipment took no time at all, despite our film training where the emphasis is on 35mm film. The most important advantage of the portapack is its flexibility in a working situation to make coverages which are impossible in 35mm and some of these coverages in SAC productions leave us with no doubt that this equipment makes the film medium appear obsolete in many important applications. Besides flexibility, the portapack eliminates the problem of footage faced by those operating with film. A desirable ratio of 1:20 for in-depth non-fiction coverages is possible with half-inch video, particularly in a developing country like ours, thus reducing production costs to a great extent.

'Despite the fact that on our campus at Pune a TV training centre exists for in-service training of Doordarshan personnel, it is indeed a tragedy-comedy that film and TV are kept apart as two media, negating in the process the immense possibility of a fusion between film and TV. Our stay at SAC has been extremely educative. Production for SAC demands commitment towards the difficult job of rural developmental

communication; where this commitment is lacking, it shows. We had the opportunity to work for the first time in the TV medium in a set-up which allows a great deal of freedom within the framework of the SAC philosophy.'

Two students were sent to Hoshangabad for practical experience in television programme production on their own. No directions were given and they were free to do what they liked. We had received an invitation for a summer workshop for science teachers, which was being conducted by Kishore Bharati at Hoshangabad. The students brought back a lot of video material and made a television programme trying to capture the spirit of the Kishore Bharati workshop in which they succeeded to a great extent.

During their stay at SAC they made several practical suggestions and also offered criticism which was well received. Recently we have noticed some improvements in production which could certainly be attributed to their suggestions and criticism. Their remarks on fusion between film and TV are very pertinent.

Anyone who has been a serious teacher knows how stimulating a student-teacher interaction could be for a teacher. We have gained a lot from NID as well as FTII students.

The hardcore utility programmes—agriculture, animal husbandry and health—constitute about 18% of Kheda transmission. For these programmes we get inputs from the subject matter specialists to ensure that, technically, distortion free information reaches the audience when it is needed. High quality timely inputs are regularly received from Kheda district health experts. For animal husbandry, the production responsibility now mainly rests with the SAC trained AMUL veterinarians. Of course, SAC producers continue to make programmes on topics such as poultry and fisheries which are magnificently supported by the user agencies.

However, when it comes to programme making in areas of social change and child development, it is a different game.

Since we started in August 1975, we wanted to focus on the oppression and bondages in the present social and economic system. We hoped to increase the understanding of the suffering people. Mobilisation of the community and the individual to free themselves from these bondages was our aim. Even though we were generally pleased with villagers' responses to our single series at different points of time, we realised a year ago, that our well meaning televised efforts had been rather piecemeal, ad-hoc, impassioned and unorchestrated. We got together to develop a new TV strategy. We discussed and debated in house. We realized the limitation of our understanding of the problems of the rural poor. At this point there was a strong urge to talk to people who could provide theoretical clarity to our thinking and make practical suggestions. We thought of a workshop on TV for the oppressed. This should discuss the whole range of questions such as the dynamics of rural exploitation—economic, social and political—and consider the special cases of exploitation of women and children.

Specialists and practitioners came for the week-end workshop generously giving us their holiday time. We showed them a few TV programmes and there were intense discussions. This gave them some idea about the level of our understanding of the problem. Many suggestions were thrown up some of which were TV-worthy. A few experts volunteered to assist us in the follow-up activity. We planned three new series with their help. Besides meeting the main objective, the workshop had a few plus points. For instance a participant narrated his experiences in Bihar. His main thesis was that action and change must ultimately come from the oppressed themselves and that communication is a vital tool for change.

One of our producers felt excited and decided to go to Bihar for a study with a portapack. Researchers accompanied him. Through the expert-participant, they established contact with government officials. Incidentally, in Bihar they met some very committed bureaucrats who gave them guidance and tremendous

support in the field. They visited a village near Daltonganj and spent several days with a big landlord and the people he was exploiting. Their video evidence was so vivid that the producer remarked that he had now no difficulty in understanding what exploitation was. He thought that the plight of the rural poor was quite hopeless and he was overcome with depression. Luckily, after a few days he went to Jamkhed and returned with renewed hope.

After the workshop we planned a few series and for each we set up separate teams of a producer, a researcher, a writer and an expert. We have in-house producers, researchers and a couple of writers but we depend on outside experts and writers. There is a great paucity of experts who are well versed in socio-economic problems and have gained experience through their work with the rural community. In spite of their genuine interest, the competent experts find it difficult to spend time with our researcher-producer team. Writers committed to the cause of rural poor are difficult to get. The team mode of programme production is an interdisciplinary mode of working, as it involves a content expert (e.g., a social scientist, or a psychologist), a producer, a communication researcher and a writer. The team defines goals, the target audience and priorities, develops a communication strategy and a curriculum for the series. It determines objectives for each programme, accepts scripts, considers the findings of script and prototype-programme testing before launching a full fledged series.

Initially, it is a very time consuming process and requires commitment on the part of the team members. The main difficulty in the smooth functioning of the team arises from the fact that each member belongs to a different discipline and much time is expended in coming to a common understanding. Under these conditions, the outside expert finds it difficult to spare the time required.

The team mode of programme production is, no doubt, a very difficult and slow process. However, there are no short cuts and the re-

wards are many in the end. The experts (except a very few) cannot obviously give the time for long drawn out exercises and for writers it is a thankless task financially. But this is the only effective way. The question then is—what do we do? Do we give up? We have discovered two ways of tackling this problem.

One is to prepare a broad outline of a script without going into the detailed scripting stage. We go to a remote village, take villagers into confidence, let them handle the subject, select the characters, work out the dialogues. If the social problem is genuine and relevant, they have enough to draw upon from their own real life experiences. And what superstars these village folks are! Such programmes have no problems of comprehension, appeal, attention, identification and credibility.

The impact is much more than we could ever imagine. In fact, these are some of our finest programmes. Of course, we have to go and live with the villagers and produce the programmes in their own environment which is what brings the best out of them. The whole exercise boosts their confidence and self image. This is essentially another form of the team mode but it does not depend so heavily on the expert and the writer. It also makes the researcher's task like script testing for comprehension, etc., redundant! The urban bias and hang-ups, preconceived ideas and notions are reduced to a very insignificant level.

The other solution to the problem of availability of an expert is to select a relevant project which has succeeded in a rural area. Send a team of a researcher and a producer with a half-inch portapack machine. Let them spend a week or a fortnight, studying the project in all its aspects, record and store data on the video portapack of their interviews, discussions, observations of the project and the people it is serving. Come back and share the video data within the group—discuss and analyse and assess. We have done this very successfully in Jamkhed, Gambhira and Dharampur. We have recounted our Jamkhed experience in the succeeding paragraphs and how we succee-

ded in acquiring Dr. Arole and his VHWs as our distant expert.

For instructional programmes on health we hold regular meetings with the Kheda district health authorities (DHA). In the course of our discussions early this year, the DHA mentioned that the family welfare and community health workers (CHW) scheme were two important priority areas in which they would like our television support. The DHAs were quite excited about the CHW scheme which they explained, and emphasized the fact that it was designed to prevent the occurrence of diseases. We agreed to send a producer-researcher team to villages to study the status of the CHW scheme.

The audio-visual material collected with a half-inch portapack revealed many shortcomings in the scheme which made us seriously wonder whether it would succeed at all. There was a tremendous perception-gap between the CHWs and the health authorities administering the scheme. For the health authorities, health came before cure while most of the trained CHWs clearly looked upon giving medicine as their primary task. When questioned as to why they had not done much work even two months after their training, they answered that they were waiting for medicine. Villagers also looked upon the CHW as a kind of a doctor who would dispense medicines. They therefore saw nothing odd in a trained CHW doing nothing till the medicines arrived. One trainee's father candidly said that after working as a CHW for some time, his son would start private practice as a doctor!

The selection of candidates was another perturbing area. Many CHWs were selected at the eleventh hour and rushed straight to the PHC for training. Some trainees were unwilling volunteers, others were selected on compassionate grounds. Few villagers knew about the CHW scheme. Nepotism, corruption and other malpractices were evident in the selection process.

The Kheda district health authorities were again invited to SAC for a meeting. The video experiences were shared with them. The health auth-

orities suggested that some of the video tapes be played back to the PHC doctors who were in charge of the training of the CHWs and responsible for its implementation. The PHC doctors could also advise the villagers concerned regarding the selection of CHW candidates. Accordingly, a video presentation was arranged at Nadiad which was attended by about 75 PHC doctors.

We on our part decided to make programmes quickly on the importance of selecting the right candidates and on giving information about the CHW scheme. The preventive aspect of the scheme was always kept in focus. In the subsequent programmes, the importance of having women CHWs was highlighted. The women's image was projected in a favourable light to promote their selection as CHWs.

Following this, the role of CHW and the role and responsibility of the community were brought to the attention of the Kheda audience. The main emphasis was on the message — that the community was responsible for the success or the failure of the scheme and, therefore, it should support the CHW in organising and completing community health activity in their village. It was decided to attack the negative aspects of the working of the scheme through the use of satire. For this purpose, an already popular series 'Zarookho' — done in Bhavai style which is specially suitable for handling satirical themes — was made use of. It was found convenient to tag it on to the 'Dahmani Vato' (a well established women's series), for projecting the image of women, highlighting the importance of action by villagers and importance of scrupulously making attempts to select the best candidate without succumbing to pressures from various sides.

Later, we had a discussion with professors from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) who were involved in the evaluation of the CHW scheme and who were interacting with the Union Health Ministry. They were training some of the senior officers from various States for this scheme. These officers were shown our video tapes and some of the TV programmes for the Kheda villagers.

They promptly asked for the loan of TV programmes for their work!

About this time a SAC producer-researcher team went to study the Comprehensive Rural Health Project which is functioning very successfully in about sixty villages around Jamkhed, a small town in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. They lived there for a week visiting the villages. They met and interviewed the village health workers, villagers and village leaders. They had extensive discussions with Dr. Arole and witnessed the long and lively sessions between him and the VHWs. These consist essentially of an exchange of ideas, information and comparing of notes. Half the time is devoted to the process of socio-economic conscientisation in the context of rural health problems. All the above aspects were extensively video taped. The video collection of five hours was brought to SAC and played back several times to producers, researchers and others with briefings and commentaries by the producer-researcher team. The material has in effect made Dr. Arole and his VHWs our distant experts who are 'easily available' for consultation.

The Jamkhed video material was also shown to the IIM professors with whom we had a very useful discussion. Jamkhed gave us real insight as to what makes a rural health project click. Apart from the commitment of all concerned, the community, the VHWs and the men of medicine in charge of the project, the important factor contributing to Jamkhed's success has been the strong linkage the health project has established with activities which cover important areas of development and social change. In fact, it derives its sustenance from activities like literacy, home industries, needle work and cooperative farming for the children's nutrition programme. Thus, health and other activities are completely meshed in and integrated.

In July we were invited to a one day brainstorming seminar on the CHW scheme at IIM, which was attended by a few officials from the Ministry of Health, Delhi. The seminar participants visited SAC and viewed some video material from Jamkhed and a few programmes on

the CHW scheme made for the Kheda audience. A very frank discussion took place and it was felt that the members of the Delhi team were open to our suggestions. Soon after this, IIM organised another training-workshop on the CHW scheme, in Gandhinagar, for 50 doctors from UP. A special programme based on Jamkhed material was shown to them. A special preview will be arranged for the officials of the Gujarat Health Department to see the Jamkhed and Kheda video material as well as the programmes made on the CHW scheme by SAC producers.

The effectiveness of communication in dealing with situations mentioned in this paper — investigation of farmers' irrigation problem, AMUL's involvement in TV production for extension work, NID/FTII students work-experiences in Kheda villages and at Hoshangabad, a producer-researcher study of exploitation in a Bihar village, evolution of the participatory team mode of production, our research based programmes on CHW and Jamkhed — could be primarily attributed to two factors. Our producers, researchers, technologists are more crusaders and activists for their new found cause than for their parent disciplines and the use of half-inch video machines for research data-gathering as well as for in situ television production. In our opinion, the discovery of a half-inch portapack machine as a production/research tool is one of the important spin-offs of our work at SAC.

The sixth plan has started rolling. The problems arising from the very large investment of resources and extension of services in rural areas will pose serious challenges to the successful achievement of the planned goals. One shudders to think about the magnitude of leakages of resources, as they pass through the public sector pipelines — only a small fraction will really reach those who deserve them most. The real receivers of the resources and services will be those who rule the rural roost, the public functionaries and the keepers of the delivery system. The distinctive aspect of rural development which must be kept in view is that it involves

disbursing of very small inputs of resources and services individually to the millions of our countrymen who reside in half a million villages spread over the vast countryside. The delivery system is not only leaky but is also sluggish. It would not be unexpected if this distribution system leads to wastages, misappropriation and corruption on a scale never seen before.

If the wastages must be avoided and the malpractices and corruption kept in check, it is necessary that the rural population be made conscious of what is their due and is organised to fight the usurpers. Unless the conscientisation and the unionisation is achieved, there is no hope of the rural poor getting their due share of credit, water, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, pumps and tractors, animals, health care and medicines, education, etc. Only the alert and organised poor can ensure that panchayats and cooperatives do not become the handmaids of the few rural rich. Only the awakened and organised poor can spur a lethargic administration to implement rural projects on time.

In this situation, the importance of a good communication system cannot be over stressed. While the hardware component of the communication system — from the sophisticated INSAT satellite to the simple down-to-earth half-inch video machine — to meet the requirements arising from the development activities would be available, the software component has not even been contemplated. The software communication capability which can generate enthusiasm among the rural people and promote their participation will be ruefully missing. Our modest experience in Kheda gives us some confidence that a participatory software communication system geared to development tasks can be organized through a team-effort of experts, producers, researchers and writers and with the active collaboration of voluntary and extension agencies. Such a system will not only provide a live communication channel between the decision makers and the potential beneficiaries — the people — but it will also facilitate the participation of people in rural development.

Case studies

K VISHWANATH

THE following is a case study provided by the formative research team of Kheda Communication Project, a unit of the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad.

'We talked to a landless labourer in a small village in Petlad Taluka. This village has a population of about 1000 people.

'Bhiku is 28 years old and is a Vankar (weaver) by caste. In the caste hierarchy he is considered slightly higher than a Harijan. The Patels and Baraiyas, who constitute the majority in the village, consider him a pariah and treat him accordingly. There are eight members in the family, including his brother's wife and children. He is a drop-out from the village primary school and began working as a labourer at the age of eleven.

'Bhiku and his brother are the only regular wage earning members of the family. They work on daily wages on a Patel's land. His daily wages are Rs 4 during peak agricultural activity and Rs 2 to Rs 3 during the off-season (needless to say, there is a Minimum Wages Act, requiring him to be paid at least Rs 5.50 for eight hours work!). He and his brother also work in the

Patel's house. As a daily wages man he cannot afford to take off on Sundays or holidays. He works 13 hours a day 7 am to 8 pm. He thinks his landlord/master is a kind-hearted and generous man who not only provides him with work but also lends him money whenever he is in financial need. Bhiku in his talk does not show any ill-feeling towards his master, nor is he aware of his total subjugation. He is ignorant of the reality that his master and saviour is making him work more for less than the legally stipulated minimum wage.

'Further, Bhiku is also blissfully unaware of the psychological bond by which his master has tied him to his household peg through petty 'generosity' (loans, festival gifts, etc.) and blatant patronisation.

'Besides working as a farm labourer, Bhiku also works as a share-cropper in another farmer's field. According to a verbal contract he has with this farmer, he gets one-fourth of the agricultural produce for all the work he does in this farm. His wife and one or two other family members also help him in this work. His wife also replaces him in the first farmer's field or house, as the case may be, when Bhiku is engaged in work in the second farm. He sells the agricultural produce to whole-sale agents who visit the village regularly during the harvest season. Not surprisingly, in this transaction also he is the loser, for the agents inevitably cheat him by under-weighing or by paying him much less than the going market rate of the produce.

'Bhiku is not ambitious by nature, and cannot imagine what else he can do to improve his condition except to continue work in the fields, as he does now. He is firmly of the opinion that he cannot afford to pick a quarrel either with the landlord or the whole-sale buyer, for he is tied to them by loans or by other obligations.'

Thus, Bhiku is an example of the poor villager who is ignorant about the exploitation he is constantly subjected to in his environment. This truth will never come to him, for all his quest in this world for a

fuller, happier life seems to have died a premature death.

This is the most important social and personal issue, the most important bottle neck for development' to make Bhiku realise that he is an autonomous man, with a future which is not predetermined. Mass media has barely touched this reality — certainly not with the conviction and urgency it demands. In fact it has, if anything, made matters worse by providing escapism fare.

In this situation, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and its philosophy came like a breath of fresh air on the media scene. For many of us, its insistence on socio-economic relevance, on reaching and communicating with the long neglected villager and on programming for the downtrodden was an exciting challenge, and opportunity.

But the areas of programme production were so large that one could put one's own ideas of social relevance into any of the many existing pigeonholes. Simultaneously, doubts did persist of one's own capability to communicate in such vast areas of human endeavour. This fear later proved false, in spite of harsh language barriers (Can you ever imagine a Kashmiri or for that matter, an Assamese or still worse a Malayalam-speaking person mouthing socially relevant themes to villagers in the interior of Gujarat where people speak a dialect, the nuances of which even Gujaratis fail to understand. But work it did.)

On another level was the thought that social relevance and credibility with the lay audiences was feasible only if one's own role was that of an active change-agent and not that of an 'objective' producer. To be socially relevant and credible, we should be able to put the microphone and camera amongst the villagers themselves and not seize it ourselves. It is this provocation of handing over the microphone to villagers and conveying their messages that may finally result in social relevance to the audience and *not* the profound messages from the pulpit, platform or the studio. It is only the former that might make a dent in the attitude of the villagers.

It was a cold December morning when, after much discussion, the following goals were finalised jointly by the Producer and Behavioural Science Centre of St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad for a series of programmes on the theme 'exploitation of the poor'. Conventional programme making approaches were thought about in achieving some main goals like the ones stated below

Main goals

- a. Recovery of self respect.
- b. Unity and co-operation leading to,
- c. Community action to disrobe and discard the evils.

Sub goals

I. Awareness of Social Structures

- a. Who has how much wealth?
- b. Who has how much power and influence?
- c. Who has how much social prestige?
- d. Who has the strength of numbers?

II Awareness of Social Values

- a. Social values determine our behaviour.
- b. Social values are created by the rich and powerful
- c. Social values are accepted by the poor without questioning.

III. Awareness of psychological alienation

- a. The high caste despise the low caste
- b. The low caste accepts this as right because:
 - i. the high castes are successful, have money, power, social prestige,
 - ii. they are totally dependent on the high caste for practically everything.
- c. Therefore the low castes despise themselves: no self respect and no respect for others.
- d. The loss of self respect destroys individual creativity.
- e. The loss of respect for their peers makes unity and co-operation impossible.

- f. The high castes take advantage of that to further exploit them.

IV. *Rejection of unjust social values leads to liberation.*

- a. Need to break the spell cast by money and power. Money and power do not make people morally superior.
- b. Others cannot feel themselves superior if you do not feel yourself inferior.
- c. Pride of birth leads to : self confidence, self respect, unity and co-operation.
- d. If others despise you, at least you must respect each other.
- e. Lack of unity spells ruin.

It was a tall order to address such complicated thought processes through a programme, or even a series of programmes of 15 to 20 minutes each. But this was a challenge provided on a platter to the production team. They first chose the easiest way out. engage a script writer, give him a story line/plot to develop and have all these messages flow like lava through dialogues rendered by different characters; to enhance the credibility of the script when it is to be realised into a programme, add touches by way of appropriate costumes and setting to depict the character of the toiling masses and village realism; to assume that that would get the job done, and expect that the gullible village audience would lap up all those messages and sermons and expect that their world would transform overnight.

For a while, such a gullible producer did exist! The spell was broken, however, thanks to the performers. Their performance could neither create the effect required nor convey the message. One could not blame them, for their background and upbringing were even more alien to the theme than that of the producer's. All through their professional life they had performed only 'middle-classish' sentimental plays and invariably for city audiences.

There was something which the content experts desired, the producer could not convey it to the artistes,

(thanks, partly, to the language barrier) though he knew instinctively that a message transfer of high magnitude was possible.

Enlightenment came at a tea shop run by a family of three consisting of father, mother and a daughter who looked 16 years old. Like the producer there were many tired, complacent, smug and unquestioning faces of performers eagerly awaiting the tea to be served. There was a flash of inspiration and a question to ponder over. Who was the audience for whom the programme was intended? The people like this family who ran a tea shop to make a paltry living or those performers with tired and complacent faces, none of whom could identify even a wee bit with that 'Chaiwala' who existed in his ramshackle shop or the play hero whom the producer had visualised? Not that our performers are not exploited but the point is that many of them are satisfied with the status quo and do not give a damn about the 'Chaiwala' or his condition.

On the other hand, our 'village hero' has been exploited for so long that he has forgotten who his tormentors are. Being disappointed with the performance of the professional artistes, one suspected that the dialogues were to be blamed. So the proper thing for the producer to do in such a situation was to take the plot to the people themselves and see how they reacted to the messages that were being given in the play.

In order to test this hypothesis, the producer went to the village itself to find out

a. whether a plot as written in the script could exist in reality.

b. if so, how would the conversations be amongst the villagers themselves in such conflict situations,

c. given a plot, whether villagers could articulate these conversations.

It was a hot afternoon ride in a rattling jeep to a village some 120 kms west of Ahmedabad. The village had a population of 2000 with no electricity, but with a road connection to the nearest town Cambay (Khambhat). The villagers are neatly

divided along caste lines with each caste group living in their own *bastis*. Our destination was the *basti* where the lowest of the low, namely the Vankars and Harijans lived. After the preliminaries, we laid our plan of action and explained to them that a drama was to be performed with their co-operation. In order to give them a clear-cut idea of the story line we had in mind, we read out the dialogues as written in the script. In consultation with the villagers, persons were selected to enact each of the roles visualised in the plot.

At first it was tough going due to various discrepancies between what existed in the script and the reality as it existed in the village. However, soon a competitive spirit developed among the villagers and everyone of them wanted to exhibit their talent. The whole rehearsal was allowed to develop with no holds barred as to the techniques of acting, technology of shooting or equipment constraints. It started dawning on many of us that the problem was theirs and the performance was theirs and finally whatever was captured on the video tape was going to be theirs. One got the feeling that 'social relevance', 'credibility', 'identification' and 'comprehensibility' all existed—almost waiting for the camera to capture them and the video tape to record them.

From then on the producer and his team were mere catalysts, technologists, presenters or thought processors whose function was only to record on video what was enacted by the villagers themselves. The purpose was, therefore, to present a mirror to the villagers, to reflect back to them the reality of their oppressed and exploited condition.

Another case study provided by the formative research team of SAC.

'Bhiku was poor, but there are others who are poorer than him. Magan is among the poorest of the poor, staying in a thatched shed situated in the Harijan *basti* which runs parallel to the Vankar *basti* where Bhiku lives. He has a sick wife with three equally sickly children. He works on daily wages and is not attached

to any particular landlord in the village. So he is employed for hardly 15 to 20 days in a month. His wages are paid very irregularly: he has to go to the landlord innumerable times begging him to pay his wages. His usual crisis is when he neither gets pay nor work. His family lives in a condition of semi-starvation. When asked who is responsible for the state he is in, he puts the blame on himself—his fate—and the landlord on a 50-50 basis. This answer is surprising for, unlike Bhiku, he shows an awareness of exploitation. But he cannot, in his present circumstances, see analytically the *why* and *what* of his situation, so he lays part of the blame at the door of God's will.

'Also, in spite of his poor condition, Magan seems to have realised his helplessness, unlike Bhiku. There was an incident in which Magan tried to rebel against a rich landlord of the village. In the Panchayat election, instead of supporting the rich landlord, he actively canvassed for the opponent who belonged to his (Magan's) caste. Thanks to various factors, Magan's candidate won the post of sarpanch but, in the bargain, Magan lost the job he had with the landlord. Worse, he was waylaid one day by hired hands of the rich landlord and soundly beaten up. Many who could afford to employ him deserted him, including his caste sarpanch; for, the situation was manipulated in such a way that even the sarpanch became a stooge of the rich and powerful people of the village. For many days Magan could not even get employment. After this incident, Magan no more thinks of rebellion against the people who provide him employment. Magan, though aware of the situation and environment he is placed in, is helpless and abandoned by his own people. He seems to live in a duality. On the one hand he knows that without improving his present position he cannot live meaningfully, and on the other hand his past experience prevents him from taking any further action to improve his status in life.'

Such brutally real case histories were the basis of the plots/scripts which were turned into programmes. It would have been perverting the truth if the professional artistes were called upon to play the roles of Magan or Bhiku or their friends in the unnatural settings of a village built in the studio.

Realist drama traditionally makes a clear-cut distinction between illusion and reality, dream and fact; in its absolute form, it recounts the individual's movement toward a knowable position of truth. This movement of a character like that of Magan towards the truth is also a movement towards the solution of his and our problem. In such a situation, it would have been a sacrilege for the producer to intervene and impose his will and technique on the drama that would unfold in front of his camera. In accepting a style that seeks to present content with as strong an illusion of reality as possible, the producer simply resorted to photographing what was being performed by the villagers.

Here the illusion of reality was further maintained by less assertive, more functional editing. This 'invisible' editing does not seek the shock effect of parallel and accelerating montage or of provocative individual juxtapositions. Of course, the editing of the recorded material did seek to implement the psychological and dramatic development but such editing was kept to the barest minimum.

A corollary to this editing was the greater emphasis that was put when photographing the action itself. This long 'take' technique (that is holding a single shot within a scene for an extended duration), with a changing flow of material in the shot made the selection and emphasis less overt, though still controllable. The relationship between the components of a single image was thus emphasised rather than between the selected components of more than one image. The result was a greater sense of simultaneity, thus giving the audience a greater sense of observation of self participation and interpretation.

In his writings after World War II, the French critic, Andre Bazin,

recapitulated and synthesized the principles of this approach which were present from the beginning of film making but often drowned out by the voices of advocates of the montage. In Bazin's words the aim is to let 'reality lay itself bare' and to have 'respect for the spatial unity of an event at the moment, when to split it up would change it from something strikingly real into something imaginary.' Among other things, this calls for careful arrangement and orchestration of elements in the shot, and in the structure, and a flow that reveals their essential truths. In this revelation, the cameraman contributed his mite by concentrating on the events happening and maintaining a reticence that furthered the unity of the straightforward recording of the villagers' performance. While this approach implemented the producer's intention to capture reality, it also contributed to more subtle and sophisticated forms of expressiveness, serving to reveal not only the movement of events but in the phrase of a famous philosopher, 'the movements of the soul'.

At this point, it would be relevant to return to the background paper for this programme series, and to quote the following extract:

'Usually there is no need to stress much the need for action. Awareness of the need for unity leads, almost naturally, to the *last stage* in our strategy of liberation-creative problem solving by the community. Having led the group to mutual respect and its concomitant joy, elation and self confidence, the group is now ready to look at the state of their community with the conviction that *they* can do something about it. We believe that it is the community or the group (and not us) who have to decide the course of action. Different circumstances may ask for different attitudes and different people may make different choices. As helper, our main concern is to avoid imposing a particular course of action on them solely because of our needs: whether social, political or religious. We hold that the most important thing is to have the

community make choices of their own and then, and only then, to see the choices are well made. If, for the sake of having them make what we consider a good choice, we make the choices for them, then it is better to have a worse choice which is theirs rather than to have a better choice which is ours. This initial philosophy of ours has been reinforced: better choices we made were, in fact, very bad choices. At present, we insist on their making choices not only because of its educative value, but also because we have come to the conclusion that a group which has been educated and raised to a certain level of consciousness is the best judge in their own affairs.

There were seven programmes in all made to bring about this awareness and consciousness—each varying in its format from the others. What is said above clearly came out both in our shooting and feed back sessions. In the programme, 'Manaskau' (Man-eaters), the structure was an interview format where conversations were conducted amongst the villagers to arouse the awareness of their situation with respect to the landlords, the police, the bureaucracy, religion, etc. At the end, when the moderator who was probing and participating in the programme questioned them about the root cause of their problem, an illiterate, middle aged woman suddenly interrupted the flow of the conversation and put the blame squarely on the youngsters who showed greater fear than their elders—despite all their education.

In another programme it was again a haggard looking woman who intervened unceremoniously but spontaneously to strike the nail on its head. The programme 'zarakh' (Hyenas) depicted the harassment of an educated Harijan by caste Hindus. In the drama he complains to his people about the harassment he has suffered at the hands of the richer and higher caste people. At the meeting he tries to unite the people to take some counter action against the rich, the elders recommended a passive attitude of social behaviour and ask the Harijan boy

to lie low, and to endure the harassment. At this juncture, an old woman rises from the edge of the audience to give vent to her feelings. She accuses the gathering of passivity, fear and impotence in the face of the harassment meted out to one of their kin. This interjection electrifies the people at the meeting; they decide to take counter action and confront the caste Hindus.

This woman's part was never visualised in the script nor could one have thought about it simply out of fear that it might look staged and hence imaginary. But when it happened in reality, shearing the curtain of helplessness and fear amongst the people, it was so dramatic that one changed the earlier worked out ending by suitably modifying what the old woman meant in her 'message'.

This was indeed a 'happening' which the video tape faithfully recorded for posterity. The events described just materialised naturally without our planning. But the happenings in front of the camera did focus on a specific, concrete problem, particularised in a clearly defined conflict situation. The structure of action that developed in this conflict had a tight coherence; individual scenes and complications contributed step by step to the development of conflict and the rising tension between the episodes. They were separate illustrations or variations on the theme. Most important of all, the action—and hence the drama—followed a precise pattern of cause and effect and was presented in rather full, concrete detail developing within individual scenes. Clear stages of internal conflict were worked out without gaps or ambiguities of motivation or influence.

The straight line explanatory connections of the casual sequences (happenings) were further locked into place by careful methods of transition. Each programme thus photographed and structured produced a clear climax, a well defined resolution, the possibility of growth of human will and awareness. Acting by the simple villagers or just their uninhibited appearance in front of the camera were painstakingly

built and improvised with small details of their body movements, voices and expressions rather than the broader and more exaggerated strokes of acting as practised in commercial cinema. And, finally there was this constant attempt to find and embody the ordered pattern of reality in terms of their existing environment to the lasting effect—'arousal of consciousness and anger leading to action amongst the poor.'

'The action as depicted in your programme was like a "chaku" being pierced into the bottom of my stomach.'

'Your programmes gave a feeling as if man-eaters have come to gobble me up. I am terribly angry. Why? Don't ask me.'

'This injustice cannot go on..'

'In such unjust circumstances defend we will, with all the might at our command.'

'We are poor hence we suffer all the injustices that are heaped on us.'

These were the sporadic comments made after a few programmes were shown to the villagers. The programmes thus proved to be 'ours', justifying the greatest sense of identification, and not 'theirs' which was always a sort of alienation. Finally, for many of us it gave a feeling that it was 'trying' that mattered—trying to involve and make people actively participate and not any other methodology of bringing in change through a medium.

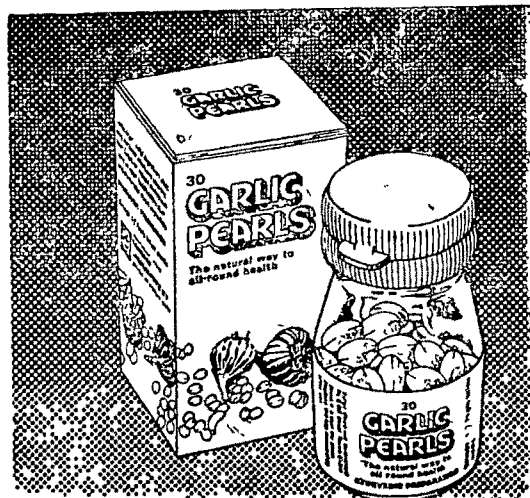
Such happenings could only be formed in an atmosphere of liveliness and active thinking in an atmosphere of seeking productive and creative work. A pre-requisite of such an atmosphere is the clash of differing opinions, the exchange of disputed ideas, discussions and debate. Surprisingly, this environment was provided by a government organisation. If any mistakes happen, it may be a small price to pay, for it is preferable to err on the side of freedom and dissent in making the necessary change in the system, than to be on the road to the cemetery of sameness.

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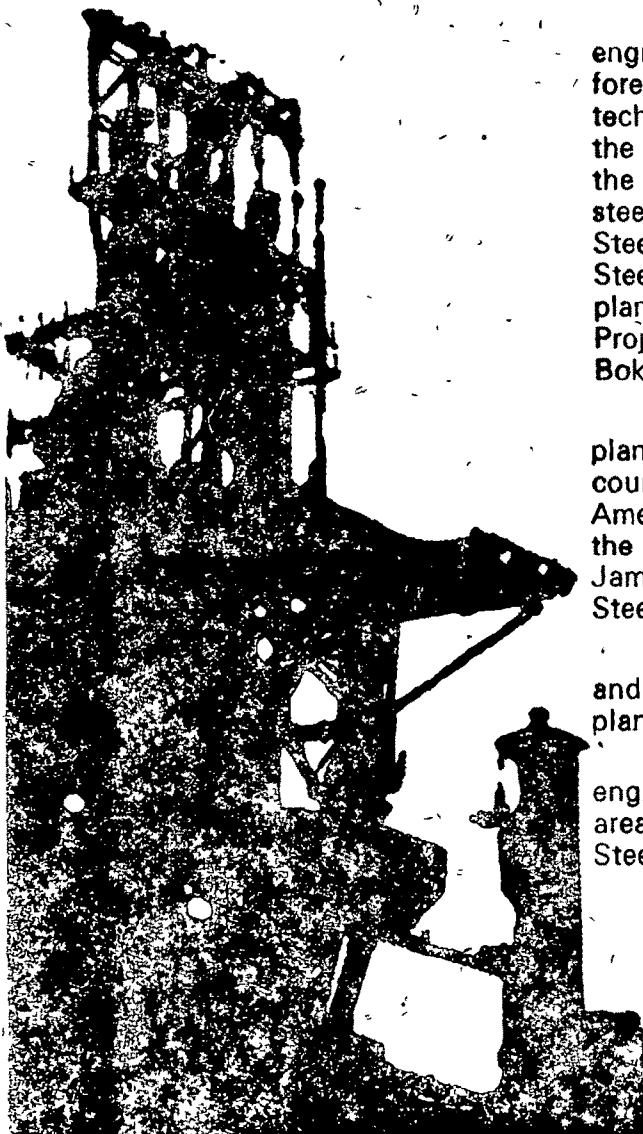
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H J BARADI

WE said, and we tried to practise. Beginning with installing the T.V. transmitter in the small village of Pij (Taluka Nadiad), we decided on the rural poor as our target audience. We prepared their 'profile' and had their 'needs' assessed. Two documented programme-plans were circulated and extensively discussed with outside writers, artists, educationists and social workers in a free and open manner. Keeping in view the cultural traditions of the target area, the series-mode of transmission approach was to be encouraged, folk forms were to be tried out; hard-core information programmes on animal husbandry/health/agriculture were to be regularly featured, a daily chunk of local affairs (instead of news from the Capitals) was thought to be appropriate. Some prototype programmes were produced and pre-tested. The producers left their air-conditioned studios not only for outdoor shooting, but also for field visits, trying to understand the audience. Developmental communication was to be the order of the day, local initiatives were to be fostered, it was going to be a responsive medium.

('If we could create a sort of dissatisfaction', someone had cried). Regular feedback was made available, programme-specific reports and holistic studies were conducted.

A planned series of programmes not doing well was stopped, while another service underwent mid-course corrections. Even the Manager had refused to oblige the reporters on the first day of the transmission with an 'off-the-record' announcement that Pij programmes 'could also be' received in Ahmedabad city!

No please, no shoe-polish was to be prescribed to the bare feet.

In those mid-SITE-year days (and late nights) of early 1976, we were planning a series of programmes for children. A jeep-load of producers and researchers alighted about half a km away and, leaving the vehicle there, they walked the distance up to village Fatehpura in Taluka Nadiad. They divided themselves into groups of two or three and talked informally and formally to the children, teachers and villagers. One of the groups strolled along the dusty, narrow streets, past low houses. It was rather romantic. Those children recited their poem, but they hardly knew the meaning of it. T.V. should really do something for them. These children play in dirty streets, a programme on health and hygiene should be immediately planned.

Said a young man: 'I work in a factory in Nadiad, earn about three

rupees a day, have studied up to the S.S.C; own a small piece of land, but not enough for livelihood ..'

'Why not think of some kind of a cooperative for tractor, water and such other services, rather than working in a factory?'

'Cooperative?' the young man looked at the questioner scribbling in a note-book.

'Why, that should be possible. Everybody pooling together their resources and development agencies multiplying them a number of times ..' His voice trailed away as he looked at the young man.

A team member came to his help. 'Don't you have a cooperative milk society? A tractor cooperative on similar lines ..?'

'We have a milk society. It purchases milk and we sell our milk.'

'And service cooperative?'

'It sells sugar and we resell our sugar — at a premium.'

After a long silence, someone mustered enough courage. 'Do you watch T.V.?'

'I did watch it for a few days in the beginning, but then ..'

On the way back, other groups also had similar stories to narrate of shattering experiences, pointing to wide-spread unemployment, under-employment and misemployment. Land could not be multiplied and alternative employment opportunities just did not exist. The selling of farm produce (and farm labour in the monsoon) was the only source of income in the villages, but all other items of daily necessities were purchased from the cities (including the same farm produce). The control of the urban minority was thus complete. T.V. originated there and also ended there.

This led to the production of another series of programmes, 'Mari Mehnat Mari Keman' (My labour, my earnings), basically dealing with cottage industries like manufacturing soap, detergents, chalk-sticks,

slate pens, etc., which could be made in the village by the unemployed or in their spare time. They could be produced and also consumed locally. The series was of a purely instructional nature, in do-it-yourself information-transfer style. The entire process of manufacturing the various items was shown (devoid of any camera gimmicks) and this almost 'demystified' the finished goods in fashionable, costly wrappers with big trade names. It was as simple as one could see on the screen. The persuasive commentary contained details of raw materials, small investment, income, etc. In some programmes, success stories were added for 'independent validation', bringing out the point that if he could, why not you?'

The response was very encouraging in the sense that many letters were received seeking clarifications, asking for more details. It was not a fan-mail. Some were eager to start, while others had tried out already and were asking us for further demonstrations. We therefore prepared manuals for each of the trades and mailed these to the interested persons, enclosing also an inspiring personal letter. Every week a new trade was shown on the screen, and letters continued to pour in, asking about training, loan/credit facilities, marketing, etc.

The telecast information and postal contacts were just not enough, something more had to be done. The craft-teaching institution in Baroda agreed to give priority to the T.V. viewer-applicants. The manufacture of most of the items was taught there in 3 to 10 days—at a fee of Rs. 5 or 10 (The Diamond Jubilee Cottage Industries Institute, Baroda, has now the second largest number of trainees from Kheda District, the largest being from Baroda city itself). Their certificates could support an application for a bank loan. And, so, the leading bank of the district—the Bank of Baroda—was contacted which even issued a circular to all its branches in the district to pay special attention to such applicants. Next, a district sale and purchase cooperative union was also roped in to market these products on a no-profit-no-loss basis. The programmes on all these facilities and

efforts, along with further success stories, were telecast while the showing of further trades was continued. A poster bringing out these points was also distributed to all the T.V. villages.

Thus, before realising what was happening, my involvement was more than what was normally expected of a programme producer. The project had become a communication-package, so my colleagues said, mobilizing the infra-structure and involving the developmental agencies. It was the combination of two 'roles'—media-support and media-effort.

Well, I am not here to tell you a success story. Things were deeper, far deeper, than I had realized.

The programme-specific feedback said that the message was not being adopted by the persons in the middle-aged group (about 35 years) and they felt 'powerless' to initiate anything new in their life. They thought: maybe their children could learn these things and start afresh.

Not that they did not understand the usefulness of the programmes, nor was there any resistance to the messages, but they felt a 'powerlessness', a result of an awareness that they were traditionally on the lowest rung of the ladder. Moreover, our target audience was not that literate minority which was aware of the possibility of getting facilities by writing letters and getting in touch with the TV studio, banks, institutes, etc. The challenge was to motivate the 'least likely innovators', who were in a majority, in fact.

The production unit, carrying portable video equipment and a few programmes, went to the village of Vishnoli (Taluka Petlad) and settled down for four days in the Harijan Vas (colony). There were eighteen families, with nearly 80 members, many of them children. They lived in abject poverty, as a majority of them had nothing but farm labour (of Rs. 2 or 3 per day) to depend on. The elders in the community had apparently come to the conclusion that nothing could be done to alter their condition, that they were destined to slog and die without ever

realizing what was a fully satisfying meal or an assured means of livelihood. There was in their eyes no despair at the conditions around them; there was only defeat, a defeat which dampened all attempts to cajole them into an effort at improving their condition.

After an initial rapport-establishing period, understanding each other, discussing all traditional alternatives and watching programmes on the T.V. monitor, they saw one more possibility of some additional income. They told me that to start these cottage industries was a better alternative and even assured me that they would do it. I was somehow not convinced. In the last few hours of our stay, I requested them to do some role-playing. Suppose they were seriously debating among themselves on how to form a cooperative to start a cottage industry, how would they do it? The camera was 'on' unobtrusively as the Harijans got into a debate in which they freely expressed their views on what should be done—knowing that it was merely acting and no commitment at all.

For a while, the group of four or five community leaders were aware of the recording of their dialogue on the VTR, but the beat of the argument developed in such a manner that later they were only role-playing and were not out to find a solution. They decided to raise fifty paise per week per family—50 in six weeks—to send a high-school going boy to learn a craft at Baroda. The group even chose a boy, Ramu, spoke to him in a convincing way and approached his parents about it.

It had clicked in the mock debate. After all the alternatives were discussed, I could see the palpable change when the decision was made. Some faint hope had flickered in the forlorn eyes of the elder Harijans and the boy's eyes had lit up with ecstasy at the prospect of a fuller life. They reaffirmed their determination when the entire recording of their mock debate (along with the shots of their houses, faces, life-style) was played back to them, it was 'out there' on the screen—they had never seen their life so objecti-

vely—in 'framed reality' and in 'patterned context'.

It was a thrilling experience for us. Something had happened—which just might trigger off action, help overcome their unknown fears resulting from the oppression of centuries.

With these hopes and satisfaction, while we were busy packing up the equipment, we noticed that about a dozen of the elders were collecting some money. I went and inquired: 'Are you sending Ramu immediately?'

'Not so fast, . . . can't-do ... However, this collection is for a goat-sacrifice on such and such an occasion. By the evening we will collect about Rs. 50.'

So that was it. Ramu was left standing there. He did not look at us when our vehicle left.

No, please, not only had they felt powerless, but the legendary, 'powerful' medium, the inter-personal contacts, and 'the amateur' were also powerless.

But we were not ready to give up. If they could not send Ramu to Baroda, a demonstration-van could come to Vishnoli and teach Ramu and the other boys in the Harijan Vas itself. The training institute at Baroda had indicated such a possibility and the van had already been purchased. The question now was to appoint field staff for it. I went to the cottage industries department in Ahmedabad, and explained how useful this van would be for 'not-at-all-likely innovators'. After a number of visits, I was told by a responsible officer that there were problems but he proposed to write 'an office note'. On a recent visit to the Baroda institute, I saw the demonstration van converted into a vehicle for the staff!

I think that Kheda telecasts can boast of many such 'grand failures', as also some success stories. At least each project has a story to narrate (*Vad thi Mora Teta*—a children's series on the 'researched' powerlessness theme; participatory programmes, creating horizontal/vertical dialogue, like *Vat Tama*, *Amarum*

Gaon Amarun T.V., *Saad Sambhaljo Re*, *Mahisagar na Moti*, *Mara Mate*, dramatic serials like *Kundalana Saap*, *Dhanji*, *Dehimanu Vato*; folk forms, the exploitation serial, the science programmes for SITE and many others.) I think, some one wrote about the learning and unlearning processes that we have passed through—and also watched the programmes.

An important lesson emerges from three years of this first rural T.V. transmission—and that is the need to make media participatory. A localized, autonomous, community controlled Radio-T.V. centre may be one of the answers. If the community is making a decision about what they want on their Radio and T.V. sets, the programmes will take care of its context and environment, its ecology. Thus, planning for 'ecological communications' will begin with identifying and analysing the innovations sought by the community itself, creating a climate where the change is not feared and the status-quo is questioned.

The participatory programming in the ecological communications approach may result in participatory democracy. It will then be impossible to underestimate or overestimate the role of the medium. The situation will strike the delicate balance between the credo-content strategy and the production strategy. The research will become relevant and the redundancy of sloganizing will be realized. Even the producers will recognise the futility of only studio based productions. (At least a few of the producers at this Centre have 'changed', I know).

This concept of ecological communication will exert constant influence on the communicators and policy-makers, as is the case with a public speaker whose responsibility to his audience is personal and direct, or as is the case with the folk-drama actors whose performance is subject to immediate review. The media-policy makers will then have to take the audience as a 'collective of human beings'. The media then will not build confrontation, but will build bridges. There will be no remote-controls; no prescriptions, please

Mode of operation

S R JOSHI

KHEDA is supposed to be one of the most developed districts in the country. It has a rich cash crop—tobacco, an affluent and hardworking, progressive community—the Patels. It is not surprising to find many Kheda Patels in Africa, England and now in the U.S.A. And, yet, if you go to a small and backward village or you meet a Harijan, or the small and marginal farmer or the landless labourer, you find them in the same plight as that of their counterparts in any other part of the country—poverty, injustice, exploitation, discrimination, ignorance, superstition and of course the same down to earth wisdom, resilience and awareness about the realities of life. While Kheda may have a large number of rich persons, it is a travesty of facts to say that there is no poverty or exploitation in Kheda. There are many rich persons in Kheda but a large majority lives in abject poverty.

It is to this Kheda that we are addressing ourselves. The better-off Kheda people have their own sources of information and entertainment—they are not dependent on community television. But the other Kheda which is neglected and deprived is the real target of our transmission. We do not transmit to them out of sympathy but we believe that television can be most efficiently and justifiably used for them.

There are about 560 community TV sets in the ten talukas of Kheda district. But the primary transmis-

sion zone is confined to six talukas where there are about 500 sets. Some of these are big villages and some are small, some have a majority of Patels and some Baraiyas and a few other castes. All the sets are not switched on every day. Quite a few people, journalists, government officials and others have come and told us that the number of sets not switched on indicates our failure.

While 100% operation of TV sets is an ideal one to aim at, one must have a more realistic expectation. You cannot equate urban and rural telecasting. Rural telecasting is faced with many problems—maintenance, finding trustworthy custodians, electricity supply, apathy of the village leaders, local politics, transmission hours, seasons, weather conditions etc., etc. We believe that on the whole about 60% of the sets are operated every day. But a slightly deeper analysis is required to put this figure in proper perspective. We must find out which types of villages are regular in TV viewing, big or small, which caste dominates the village, etc.

We have found that small, remote and backward villages and those dominated by lower or middle castes are very regular in switching on the sets. The majority in the audience are the lower classes and castes—small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, artisans, Rajputs, Harijans, etc. There are about 40% children and of the adults 65% are men and 35% are women. We have found that on an average there are about 120 people watching TV programmes per TV set. It can be safely said from all this that about 12,000

*My grateful acknowledgement to all the SITE Continuity formative researchers' help

people watch our programmes every day. Audio-visually, we reach about 5000 children, 5000 men and 2000 women of the small and remote villages. In that, we believe, lies the strength of the medium.

What is the effect of our programmes? How are they received? Are there any communication gaps? Such are some of the natural questions that come to mind. I will narrate a few of the experiences from our field observations, pretesting of programmes and feedback taken from time to time. But before going over to that, I would like to state a few things about our programmes.

There are two organizations working at Kheda TV centre—Doordarshan and the Space Applications Centre. Doordarshan mainly deals with news, news coverage and entertainment programmes while we at the Space Applications Centre make programmes which consist of about 18% hardcore (agriculture 6%, animal husbandry 5%, health 7%, 7% children, 6% general information, 43% socio-economic, 11% miscellaneous, and 5% entertainment).

In the socio-economic area, we include themes on untouchability, prohibition, superstition, minimum wages, exploitation, cooperation amongst the oppressed, women's problems, etc. The hardcore programmes generally give straightforward, matter of fact information which is needed. The children's programmes are either of information on things children are curious about, further, there are science programmes and those with a social, psychological objective like motivating children to improvise solutions to everyday work and play problems. The general information section includes programmes on how to make marketable things, sell them as also support programmes to regular hardcore series and other relevant and useful information. The miscellaneous section mainly includes answers to viewers' letters. Under the heading of entertainment, we include those programmes which are wholesome entertainment. This, however, does not mean that other programmes are not entertaining.

In broadcasting organizations, social research is mostly used to mea-

sure the impact—obviously after the programmes are produced and transmitted. While impact studies and summative evaluations are important and useful, it must be remembered that they are in the nature of a post mortem. There must be attempts to avoid mistakes rather than find them out afterwards. It is to this end that we are trying to use social research—formative research rather than summative research.

Formative research consists of preparing audience profiles, needs assessment, good statement listing of alternate teaching strategies to reach the goal, estimate of initial level of audience in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, writer's briefs, including suggestions on take-off situations, prototype testing, and progress during transmission (including occasional feedback).

I shall illustrate how we are putting these various steps of formative research to work and what have been our experiences, but before that I must state a few things about our philosophy and how we work at the centre

As stated earlier, we are engaged in making experimental television programmes for the rural community of Kheda district. Our prime target is the underprivileged majority—the small and marginal farmers, the landless labourers, the artisans, the Harijans and other weaker sections of the society. The basic purpose is to use television as a tool for education and development

But it is not just that we have this goal in mind—we are taking concrete steps to put it in practice in a special way. This special way consists of adopting an interdisciplinary approach, working in the team mode for producing programmes. The team consists of a producer, a researcher, a scriptwriter and a content expert who are the main pillars of a TV programme. They work together and are involved in all stages of production in, of course, varying degrees—sometimes the researcher plays a more important role, sometimes the producer, but they all are involved in a joint activity—the outcome is a culmination of their joint efforts. This joint effort is facilitated by the

credo, a programme philosophy that we have given ourselves.

***Development—economic social, cultural or ideological—implies a break from the status quo, from inertia, it implies movement, change. Change requires a certain attitude, motivation, information and, of course, appropriate physical and social infrastructures. It also requires an objective understanding of one's predicament—the family and social constraints one works within. This necessitates the development of a rational outlook, a scientific attitude towards life**

'Development implies social change, education, awareness and, of course, economic development. However, economic development cannot take place in isolation, it requires changes in the social system and in the attitude of the individual, it implies breaking away from bondages and oppression, and, most importantly, it necessitates an "awakening" of the individual and his self-confidence.

'In trying to accelerate development communication can play a very major role. Television, in particular, can be a powerful tool in creating a "climate" for development

'Our attempt in Kheda will be to use TV—and also to supplement it by other means—for development in the broadest meaning of the term.'

This credo serves as a guiding star. It guides our communication strategies, acceptance of scripts for programmes, approval for a series of programmes and go/no-go decisions for programme transmission. But, above all, it creates a certain degree of likemindedness amongst all of us here—producers, researchers and writers.

All this is further facilitated by the physical proximity to the audience. It enables us to keep in constant touch with the audience through daily visits. This has resulted in our acquiring rich experiences and first hand knowledge of the audience. The researchers develop audience profiles and undertake needs assessment studies which work as the data base

*Excerpts from Kheda Credo, SAC

to the programmes. And the frequent visits to villages by producers enable them to talk about various aspects of Kheda people from first hand knowledge, but in spite of all this we are deeply conscious of our limited knowledge and experiences and do not hesitate to ascertain facts by undertaking specific studies.

We do a good deal of formative work before transmission

1. Discussion about ideas for production We have discovered that a series of programmes with a specific goal is more impactful than single slot programmes made on different topics. A producer brings up for discussion his ideas for a series (current and new) in a meeting of producers, researchers and writers. This throws light on the goal, the target audience, the approach, the possible implications in making the series of programmes, etc

Another advantage of this mode is that it helps us to develop a common understanding, and many of the 'side discussions' which take place throw a great deal of light on existing programmes.

2 Research inputs in programme production Formative research inputs get into a programme during the various stages of its formation. These are provided in a more concentrated manner in a series of programmes done in the team mode. Right now we are working on two children's series, health series and women's series. In the women's series, we had even put a researcher as an artiste who prompted the lead artiste in her impromptu dialogue with villagers.

In a programme prepared in Bihar, researchers and the producer worked very closely through all the stages of production both in the field as well as in the studio. For making programmes on Community Health Workers' Scheme, the producer joined hands with the researchers in collecting research material with portapacks and presenting the video results to the district health authorities and working out programme strategies with the subject experts

3. Script Committee When the ideas are converted into scripts, they are brought to a committee consisting of a producer, a writer, a researcher and a production assistant who examine them—sitting together—from their respective points of view. Doubts are often clarified by calling the producer/writer to the committee meetings.

4 Preview. We preview about 15% of the programmes to be transmitted. This is done at joint meetings of producers, writers and the researcher. There is an immediate exchange of views and suggestions on the programmes. On the basis of the preview, we sometimes decide to take feedback on a particular programme or pretest it. The results of pretesting clarify the doubts we may have had in the preview.

5 Pretesting Some programmes are pretested. This is done especially when a new format is used or when a new series is in the offing or when it is feared that something may be misunderstood in a programme or a negative and unintended message may get conveyed.

After transmission, we do transmission analysis, conduct feedback, take note of viewers' letters, and make content-wise analysis of programmes

1 Transmission Analysis Researchers watch programmes at the time of transmission. They are analysed from the research point of view and the comments are communicated to the producers.

2 Feedback Researchers take occasional feedback on programmes (about 10%). The reports are communicated to producers either verbally and/or in writing. The feedback is an important aspect of our communication system, as information comes from the destination—the people.

3 Viewers' Letters We analyse the letters received from viewers. We see which programmes they like, which they do not like, who writes the letters, from which villages they come, etc. Limitations of getting information through these letters

are known but still they do provide an extra bit of information which is often useful. We answer some of the letters and try to communicate with them, tell them about our credo, our limitations and that we welcome criticism of programmes. Through this we establish a dialogue with our audience.

4. Content analysis We make content analysis of transmitted programmes every month. This provides good guidelines for programme planning and keeping track of the time distribution of the Kheda transmission.

It must be remembered that we work in an operational situation and I do not claim that all these steps are followed in all programmes, because that is not possible when the work is being done under the high pressure of transmission schedules.

Formative research, as I stated earlier, helps in avoiding costly mistakes in programme production. It can also help in making the programmes more relevant, need-based, meaningful and useful. But I would like to stress that we should be extremely modest in our expectations about where we shall succeed and where we shall reach. In spite of our being in close contact with the audience, and in spite of close scrutiny of programmes and interaction between producers, researchers and writers, we have come up with many surprises.

I must, in this context, stress once again that we are working in an operational situation. The formative research that we do is not academic research. It is often quick and dirty. It has to be so because it is used in a situation where operational deadlines have to be met. Formative research inputs must be available to the producer when he needs them.

Audience profile helps the producer in getting a general idea about the audience he is going to communicate with. The people, their culture, folklore, festivals, food, beliefs, attitudes etc., are presented in written or visual form. This is particularly helpful in those centres

where the producers are far off from the target audience and cannot frequently go to it. Even to those who are close by, it helps in getting a perspective of the audience.

Needs assessment is extremely useful, for in its absence the programme can be irrelevant, non-functional and meaningless. While assessing the needs, we must keep in mind whose needs we are assessing. We must assess both felt and observed needs. Are these the needs of our audience? What is the priority of the needs? Which needs can be met by TV and which cannot be? These are some questions which we have to consider. In Kheda, for example, people say that dowry is a big problem. And it is true that amongst the Patels it is a major social and economic problem. But the Patels are not our audience and it serves no purpose making programmes for them.

The needs of our audience are different—simple, relevant straightforward information on matters of agriculture, animal husbandry, and health. For example, in health what they want to know is not about intensive heart care or cancer but on prevention/cure and first aid for prevalent diseases like cholera, malaria, etc.

The people in our audience face injustice, discrimination and exploitation. They would welcome some suggestions about how to fight against exploitation, about their rights, about how they can improve their economic conditions. They have their own frustrations and aspirations. Our programmes, therefore, must be relevant to these basic needs. Entertainment also is needed but it should be the entertainment which they enjoy. We should presume nothing but assess their felt and observed needs and make programmes accordingly.

An estimate of the initial level of the audience—the entry skill—is very important because in its absence you may either undershoot or overshoot. There is often a tendency amongst producers to overestimate the audience. For example, one of our producers made a programme which dealt with exploita-

tion in the name of religion. The programme showed the ceremony of weighing the head priest of a religious sect with flowers, diamonds, jewels, etc. There was a lot of pomp and the ceremony was attended by thousands of followers. This too when the religious sect was supposed to preach and practise simplicity and austerity. The visuals were accompanied by verses (*chhapas*) of a thinker-poet, Akha, who lived about 350 years ago. These verses which are in old Gujarati are a severe criticism of religious rituals and pomp.

When we pretested the programme we found, to our utter surprise, that the illiterate and the semi-literate group thought that the programme was for '*prachar*' (propaganda) of the religious sect. Akha's verses were not perceived at all by this group. Even after repeated exposure, when only the audio was presented, they hardly understood the meaning of a few lines and still failed to relate the words with the visuals. The producer had assumed that the verses would be known to all the villagers. That, however, was not the case. Naturally, the attempted contrapunct by the producer failed. This situation would have been avoided if the producer had determined beforehand what the audience would know/understand/comprehend.

We had some pleasant surprises also. A producer had some programmes which combined the popular folk form of '*bhavar*' with the play format. In the preview we found the programmes to be loud, crude and exaggerated and we decided not to make any more in the series. But when we went to the villages we found that the programmes were drawing huge crowds. Our feedback showed that comprehension of the programmes was also high. We decided to continue the series and it is going sixty programmes strong with the same popularity.

Our health programmes are based on detailed needs, assessment studies and specification of entry skills. It is seen that the audience has found most of the programmes to be relevant, useful and our feedback has

shown that comprehension of the programmes has been high. An impact study recently carried out also shows that they have resulted in significant gain in knowledge about health matters.

This brings me to another point—of developing various strategies for reaching the goal. Hardcore programmes are usually made in interview or documentary formats. This results in low interest and attention. We therefore decided to try out play formats for health programmes. We took feedback on this new format and we found that not only did attention and interest increase which in turn resulted in bigger audience size but even comprehension increased.

Another strategy that we adopted was to make quickies. A quickie is a 2-3 minute short and crisp programme which is repeated daily. This is done mainly when there is an outbreak of some disease and we want to remind and motivate people about prevention/cure of the disease. For example, when some cases of cholera were observed in Kheda district we immediately transmitted cholera quickies which told people about how to prevent the spread of cholera and how to treat cholera cases. Similarly, we have produced quickies for malaria, and animal husbandry programmes.

Feedback on these quickies have shown that interest, attention and comprehension of messages in the quickies are high. Another advantage of the quickies is that because of their continuous repetition, there is reinforcement of the message.

When urban producers and writers make programmes for rural areas, there are sometimes problems about authenticity and credibility of the plot, characterization, language, dress, etc. In spite of being in close touch with the rural audience, we have found that establishing authenticity and credibility can be a problem. One possible solution is to go to the people themselves as was done by one of our producers. He wanted to make a series of programmes on the theme of exploitation—caste exploitation, sexual exploitation, economic exploitation,

bonded labour, etc. The script for the programme on bonded labour was written by an Ahmedabad writer and enacted by city actors. The producer was not satisfied at all because the actors were not able to bring out the nuances or the intensity required to bring out the plight of the bonded labourers or the cruelty of the zamindar. He thought of experimenting with going and asking villagers to perform in the programme.

He went to a village and gave the Harijans the plot, they were allowed to choose their parts, improvise dialogues and situations. These Harijans, from a village which is extremely backward, has no electricity and from where very few people had even seen movies, came up with brilliant performances. The force and ingenuity of their performance, the nuances they brought in were really excellent. The programmes had no problems about authenticity or credibility because their 'acting' was almost reliving their own experiences. Naturally, there was no question about the villagers being unable to comprehend the programmes.

Identification also was natural. When we showed the programmes to villagers, what was most interesting was the intense debate that took place between them, the emotions and anger that were observed in the group. It created, as one villager put it, 'anger and intense desire to fight injustices'.

Another strategy that we are adopting in this connection is to invite scripts through daily announcements over TV, from the villagers. These scripts, we believe, will be based on their experience, their needs, their problems, and will be in their language. These will have greater authenticity and credibility. We also produce many programmes in the field wherein villagers talk about their problems, difficulties and their views on various issues. There is a greater tendency towards making participatory programmes. This produces a sense of identification with the medium.

I should make special mention of a programme based on a real inci-

dent — an incident which created waves of shock and horror in the whole State. A child — the only son in the family — was kidnapped and killed as a sacrifice in the belief that such a sacrifice would beget a child. This programme consisted of interviews with the child's parents, the sadhu who advised this sacrifice, the two accused — the kidnapper and the childless man. Feedback on the programme showed that there was pin drop silence and complete comprehension.

The programmes created a sense of anger and revulsion, but it also came out that there was ignorance about the biological facts of how a child is conceived. While they considered child sacrifice to be shocking they also thought that sacrifices of animals etc., could help in begetting a child. We therefore decided to make a few programmes against this superstitious belief. Thus, we try to make it a continuous process of finding out what the people know, what should be clarified.

Last year we decided to plan a special series for children and to work on it in the team mode. We discussed the problems, needs and life style of Kheda children at length and decided, on suggestion of the content expert, that the area of adult-child interaction needed more attention and could be taken up for programming.

While discussing rural exploitation, it was felt that exploitation of children does not only mean child labour, beating and induction into begging, rather, the problem is manifested in different forms and at different levels. One of these subtle forms of 'exploitation' is the lack of recognition of children as individuals. The way children are treated by parents, teachers and by other care-takers, may itself give rise to difficulties for children. It is often observed in the villages that children are being pushed around, scolded, punished and made use of to perform chores more for the convenience of adults. Apparently, children are expected to take an adult role for certain jobs, whereas in other situations they are treated as children. They are often punished for not doing or spoiling the work assigned

but rarely rewarded for performing it well.

In the light of our understanding and analysis of the problem, it was decided to aim at increasing the sensitivity of children and adults towards others and towards their environment.

The approach for programming would be to expose the various transactions taking place in the everyday life of the child and adults which would make them sensitive to the behaviour and feelings of others.

At the outset we did not know which format would best communicate the message and would also appeal to the audience. The producer suggested two different formats. We decided to experiment and test out both before finalizing one for the series. Accordingly, two prototype programmes were produced for pretesting purposes. Both the programmes had the same objective, but used different formats to convey the message. One used a slightly sentimental approach to bring out the sensitivity of the audience whereas the other one used a court (children's court) to analyze and discuss the problem.

The programmes were pretested with adults and children separately. The results showed that both the programmes were found interesting and had the potential of conveying the message. The language in the court part was difficult to comprehend because it was a bit alien to them but it provided a better stimulus for making the audience analyze the problem and see things in perspective. We would, therefore, like to convey the message through such a court with which they could identify easily.

These 'quick and dirty' inputs, continuous contact with the audience, interaction with the producers and experts, giving formative inputs at various stages and in various amounts, a sense of dedication and commitment on the part of researchers, producers and writers, a research and learning culture, can make television an effective tool of learning, education and development and so it should.

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